MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS

JANUARY
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FEATURE FILMS

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Among The Living
Babes On Broadway
Ball of Fire
Bedtime Story
The Corsican Brothers
Kathleen
Hellzapoppin'
Lady For a Night
Louisiana Purchase
Mr. District Attorney in The Carter Case
Paris Calling
The Perfect Snob
Playmates
Remember The Day
Road Agent
The Road to Happiness
Sealed Lips
Shanghai Gesture
Steel Against The Sky
Tarzan's Secret Treasure
They Died With Their Boots On
Three Girls About Town
Two Faced Woman
The Vanishing Virginian
Week-End For Three
The Wolf Man

SHORT SUBJECTS

Changed Identity
The Night Before Christmas

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FEATURE FILMS

AMONG THE LIVING ◇ ◇

Albert Dekker, Susan Hayward, Harry Carey, Frances Farmer, Gordon Jones, Jean Phillips, Ernest Whitman, Maude Eburne, Frank M. Thomas, Harlan Briggs, Archie Twitchell, Dorothy Sebastian, William Stack. Screen play by Lester Cole and Garrett Fort. Story by Brian Marlow and Lester Cole. Direction by Stuart Heisler. Paramount.

This is a gruesome psychological drama filled with violence and murder, which will have a limited audience appeal, although there is fascination in its sustained horror and suspense. It portrays the way in which a man, neither completely crazed nor completely sane, reacts to a world from which he has been excluded for some twenty years. The director has retained the mood consistently and Albert Dekker gives an excellent performance in a dual role.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** Unwholesome

❖

BABES ON BROADWAY ◇ ◇

Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, Fay Bainter, Virginia Weidler, Ray McDonald, Richard Quine, Donald Meek, Alexander Wolcott, Luis Alberni, James Gleason, Emma Dunn. Screen play by Fred Finklehoffe and Elaine Ryan from original story by Fred Finklehoffe. Direction by Busby Berkeley, Produced by Arthur Freed. M.G.M.

The spirit of youthful enthusiasm pervades this musical extravaganza. It tells the story of a trio of boy professionals who want their chance on Broadway and achieve it by charitably helping other children. Individual specialty acts and ensembles fit smoothly into the plot. The performers are young, capable and clever. Mickey Rooney appears to advantage in a role tailored to his capabilities. He plays the piano, sings, dances and produces a show within a show. He and Judy Garland give several impersonations of old-timers, Harry Lauder, Richard Mansfield and Sarah Bernhardt and others, and do it fairly well; by contrast Rooney's impersonation of Carmen Miranda is a huge success in make-up and mannerisms. Several musical numbers are good, particularly one with English refugee children and a moving panorama of pre-war London in the background. Ray McDonald is a talented youth whose personality, expressive face and nimble feet should assure him a successful career.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Delightful **Children, 8 to 12** Good

BALL OF FIRE ◇ ◇

Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Oscar Homolka, Henry Travers, A. Z. Sakall, Tully Marshall, Leonid Kinskey, Richard Haydn, Aubrey Mather, Allen Jenkins, Dana Andrews, Dan Duryea, Ralph Peters, Kathleen Howard, Mary Field, Charles Lane, Gene Krupa and his Orchestra. Screen play by Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder. Original story by Thomas Monroe and Billy Wilder. Photography by Gregg Toland. Musical director, Alfred Newman. Producer, Samuel Goldwyn. R.K.O.

Prince Charming and the Seven Dwarfs are suggested by the cast of this unusual comedy, in which a group of erudite gentlemen are engaged in the completion of a new encyclopedia. Their regimented absorption in the work is interrupted when they reach the letter "S." Wishing to include an article on slang, they discover in a chance meeting with a garbage collector that they know nothing of modern lingo. One professor brings into the household a strip-tease dancer, *Sugarpuss O'Shea*, who finds it expedient to hide from the police. They are enchanted by her presence, disturbed by her sex appeal. The dialogue and situations are the most subtly sophisticated and really suggestive ones yet put on the screen.

The college professors are remarkably clever: Haydn, Sakall, Homolka, and Travers especially, and Allen Jenkins is a riot as the garbage collector. Gary Cooper gives another of his dependable, delightful performances, and Barbara Stanwyck is alluring in the role of *Sugarpuss*.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

BEDTIME STORY ◇ ◇

Fredric March, Loretta Young, Robert Benchley, Allyn Joslyn, Eve Arden, Helen Westley, Joyce Compton, Tim Ryan, Olaf Hytten, Dorothy Adams, Clarence Kolb, Andy Toombes. Screen play by Richard Flourney. Story by Horace Jackson and Grant Garrett. Produced by B. P. Schulberg. Direction by Alexander Hall. Columbia.

The fault of "Bedtime Story" is its lack of plot originality. We have had so many domestic comedies recently which deal with the problems of husbands and wives, both of whom are engaged in careers, that we could wish the subject could be settled once for all or else discarded. Miss Young plays the beautiful actress wife of a playwright. She announces her retirement to a farm in Connecticut only to discover that her husband has sold the farm to finance his new play in which he expects her to star. The action then is concerned with his attempts to arouse her interest in the play and to prevent her from divorcing him. When these efforts have failed and she has married another man, he manages to disrupt the marriage through a legal technicality and to win her back. However, she has the last word, for she closes the successful run of the play to "await an act of God." The popular cast and smooth direction may please audiences who are not surfeited with this type of domestic farce and who are willing to believe that a happy solution for marital infelicity can be reached after a trip to Reno and an intervening marriage.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

THE CORSICAN BROTHERS ◇ ◇

Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Ruth Warrick, Akim Tamiroff, J. Carrol Naish, H. B. Warner, John Emery, Henry Wilcoxon, Walter Kingsford, Pedor De Cordova, Veda Ann Borg, William Farnum, Sarah Padden, Manart Kipper. Adapted from the story by Alexandre Dumas. Direction by Gregory Ratoff. Edward Small Production. United Artists.

Perhaps a picture patterned from Alexandre Dumas' swashbuckling melodrama could not have been released at any better time, for its romantic adventure seems far removed from world events today, yet the theme is still the too familiar one of aggression pitted against justice and freedom. The plot follows the story of two Corsican brothers who are saved in infancy from the predatory Colonna who had wiped out their family and taken over their estate. The two babes are Siamese twins whom surgery has severed. For their own safety they are sent to different families for rearing and do not meet until grown, but between them is a curious, inexplicable emotional bond, which in the weaker is psychic with physical reactions. And here again the sub-plot carries on the theme of right triumphant, for these ties must finally be broken to prove that honor and decency must survive in a better world.

Douglas Fairbanks Jr. makes *Mario* and *Lucien* subtly different, a beautiful performance. Akim Tamiroff is excellent in the role of Colonna, and Ruth Warrick is the lovely heroine whom both brothers love. The cast is entirely competent. The elaborate French Empire interiors are very beautiful, and the action is stirring with a skillful and thrilling duel as the dramatic highlight. It is a good though uninspired presentation of the famous novel by one of the world's greatest writers of romantic fiction. Douglas Fairbanks Jr. is an able successor to the type of role his father created on the screen, in spite of the fact that he somehow lacks the contagious enthusiasm which the elder Fairbanks conveyed to his audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Exciting

KATHLEEN ◇ ◇

Shirley Temple, Herbert Marshall, Laraine Day, Gail Patrick, Felix Bressart, Nella Walker, Lloyd Corrigan, Guy Bellis, Wade Boteler. Screen play by Mary C. McCall Jr., based on story by Kay Van Riper. Direction by Harold S. Bucquet. Produced by George Haight. M.G.M.

Two competent women writers were wisely given the assignment of a screen play for Shirley Temple. The result is a sound interpretation of adolescent life. An unhappy, lonely, motherless girl whose father is too busy to see what is going on, is left in charge of an unsympathetic, unloving governess. In her unhappiness she creates a dream world as a means of escape, and these dream episodes are cleverly and amusingly woven into actuality. The adolescent psychology and behavior are true to fact. Shirley Temple has lost her self-conscious mannerisms and is natural and unassuming. The action does not require much dramatic ability but several scenes draw tears because they are not overdrawn and Shirley makes them very real.

It is a nice little story of a child whose need of an understanding father comes true, and to this is added a mother whom she can love. Felix Bressart does a beautiful piece of acting as the second-hand dealer who is *Kathleen's* confidante and guide. There is not sufficient love making to offend adolescents, and the pranks which are normal reactions to adult injustice will delight young people.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

HELLZAPOPPIN' ◇ ◇

Ole Johnson, Chic Johnson, Martha Raye, Hugh Herbert, Jane Frazee, Robert Page, Mischa Auer, Richard Lane, Lewis Howard, Clarence Kolb, Nella Walker, Shemp Howard, Elisa Cook Jr., The Congeroo Dancers, Olive Hatch water Ballet, The Six Hits, Slim and Slam. Screen play by Nat Perrin and Warren Wilson, based on stage play by Olsen and Johnson's Hellzapoppin'. Musical director, Charles Pervin. Musical numbers staged by Nick Castle and Edward Prinz. Photography by Woody Bredell with special effects by John Fulton. Direction by H. C. Potter. Universal Pictures.

"Hellzapoppin'" is completely mad, zany nonsense. Its long stage run should prove that it has the elements of popular ribtickling comedy, and the screen version is successful in preserving the original fabric. The opening title, "Any similarity between 'Hellzapoppin'' and a motion picture is purely coincidental," prepares us for the fact that it follows no known formula, and its noisy, spectacular and hilarious progress is like nothing ever seen on the screen before. A slight plot successfully ties the absurdities together. A girl and a boy are in love, but the boy will not admit his feelings because he is poor and he knows that his wealthy friend loves her also. The boy is staging a show on the girl's estate and, since its success might change his attitude about proposing, Olsen and Johnson, who have reason to believe that the girl is having an affair with a Russian Prince, decide to wreck the show, and thus their friend's chances with the girl. Their frantic efforts only make the performance hilariously funny and, of course, a hit bound for Broadway.

A large cast wanders on and off the sets, many with no apparent reason for being there, but they all enter into the madness with complete abandon and add to the illogical mirth. Photography makes many scenes funnier than was possible on the stage; music is loud but good of its type; Negro jitterbugs, Conga dancers, and a water ballet are spectacular; lavish sets and costumes add beauty.

Audience participation is invited in many scenes, which makes the production more intimate than one could imagine. However, park all your prejudices at home and you will get many a deep and satisfying laugh from absolute tomfoolery.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 Perhaps, confusing but funny

❖

LADY FOR A NIGHT ◇ ◇

Joan Blondell, John Wayne, Philip Merivale, Blanche Yurka, Ray Middleton, Edith Barrett, Leonid Kinskey, Hattie Noel, Montagu Love, Carmel Myers, Dorothy Burgess, Hall Johnson Choir. Story by Garrett Fort. Screen play by Isabel Dawn and Boyce De Gaw. Direction by Leigh Jason. Republic Pictures.

While some might consider this picture plausible, many who have a more realistic sense of social values, will rate it as pure clap-trap. The queen of a gambling house buys herself a husband and a fine old Southern estate, both in need of rehabilitation; then her ex-partner, who wields a political blacksnake and holds the gambling I.O.U.'s of all the best people, forces the elite to attend a gala ball at her mansion. In a day when makers of films hesitate to disparage any particular race or class, it is surprising to find the old families of the South, of Memphis in particular, placed several degrees lower than characters of the underworld. In behalf of the film it must be said that many of the settings are beautiful and the cast is good. John Wayne is natural and has a good deal of charm. Joan Blondell is attractive, especially in the scenes when she is trying to be "a lady," and all the members of the *Alderson* family (Ray

Middleton, Philip Merivale, Edith Barrett, Blanche Yurka) give excellent interpretations of their parts.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 Impossible

LOUISIANA PURCHASE ◇ ◇

Bob Hope, Vera Zorina, Victor Moore, Dora Drake, Irene Bordoni, Raymond Walburn, Maxie Rosenblum, Phyllis Ruth, Frank Albertson. Story by B. G. De Sylva. Screen play by Jerome Chodorov and Jo Fields from the musical comedy by Morrie Ryskind. Music and lyrics by Irving Berlin. Direction by Irving Cummings. Paramount.

The musical comedy which has delighted New Yorkers for many moons tops the list of gorgeous film spectacles made in Technicolor. The sheen of materials, the blending of rainbow hues, the sparkle of jewels worn by beautiful girls, reach their culmination in scenes of the Mardi Gras, which are something out of a fairy tale. The prologue states in jaunty rhyme that since the whole affair is fiction, you can call a crook a crook. Bob Hope as the president of a concern called the Louisiana Purchasing Company, has been made the scapegoat for his grafting colleagues, and his only recourse is to compromise the *Senator* (Victor Moore), who comes to conduct an investigation. Since this is all done in the spirit of burlesque and the audience understands the hoax, it is not really shocking when show-girls pop up from all corners of the solon's bedroom. The jokes are quick on the trigger, usually very funny, occasionally off-color. Political cracks are particularly telling, with most of the brick-bats thrown at the Democrats, but since the butt of the main jest is a Republican, insults stand about even. Zorina is graceful and dances in perfect form and is a charming actress, and Bob Hope plays his part with zest, but it is Victor Moore who always holds the center of the stage with just the right mixture of innocent befuddlement and sharp, political acumen.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Funny but sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature

MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY IN THE CARTER CASE ◇ ◇

James Ellison, Virginia Gilmore, Franklyn Pangborn, Paul Harvey, Lynne Carver, Spencer Charters, Douglas Fowley, John Eldredge, Eddie Acuff, John Sheehan, Bradley Page. Screen play by Sidney Sheldon and Ben Roberts based on Phillips Lord's radio program "Mr. District Attorney." Direction by Bernard Vorhaus. Republic Pictures.

It is difficult to imagine that this is anything but a comedy burlesque of all pictures dealing with newspaper girl sleuths, district attorneys and murder cases. And yet, if so, it is not well enough done to be successful. The smart girl reporter won't give up her job to marry the attorney; she is sure that he has convicted an innocent man in a murder case and proves her point after many farcical situations which are neither sufficiently funny nor sufficiently realistic to hold undivided interest. There are two murders and a wild automobile chase which is impossibly fantastic.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

PARIS CALLING ◇ ◇

Elizabeth Bergner, Randolph Scott, Basil Rathbone, Gale Sondergaard, Lee J. Cobb, Charles Arnt, Edward Ciannelli, George Renavent, William Edmunds, Paul Leysaac, Adolph Millar. Screen story by Benjamin Glazer and Charles Kaufman from an original story by John S. Toldy. Musical score by Richard Hageman. Photography by Milton Krasner, A.S.C. Direction by Edwin L. Marin. Produced by Benjamin Glazer. Universal Pictures.

The script of this story of espionage is better than its presentation on the screen, for a new phase gives it fresh interest. The heroine is a French girl whose attitude must typify that of many of her compatriots in the last days when France capitulated to the enemy. Completely unaware of her country's danger, carrying on her social life without interruption, uninterested in politics and unsuspicious of intrigue, she is caught by the debacle totally unprepared. But in her case, shock vitalizes her to desperate action. She becomes a member of the underground movement aiding England and proves her loyalty to the Free French.

The director has failed to provide flowing action and whether intentionally or not, has not typed the different nationalities sufficiently clearly to create an illusion of reality, thus lessening the emotional impact. But in treating the psychology of several characters the writers have done well. There is the case of the youthful German aviator whose first revulsion against the saddistic bombing of innocent evacuees is later overcome by his regimented loyalty to the German cause. The American member of the R.A.F. has fought in Spain on the Loyalists' side, in China against the Japanese, and against the Axis for England, because "it is the same war, and one which must be won." These men paint a picture of reality with no concession to sentiment. The setting, too, is one not used before and it arouses sympathy for an embarrassed people.

Elizabeth Bergner is a welcome addition to American films. Her restrained acting carries deep conviction, and her expressive face, the illusion of rare beauty. Basil Rathbone and Randolph Scott are competent as usual. The musical score is very beautiful.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depends on emotional stability, especially today

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE PERFECT SNOB ◇ ◇

Lynn Bari, Cornel Wilde, Charlie Ruggles, Charlotte Greenwood, Anthony Quinn, Alan Mowbray, Chester Clute, LeRoy Mason. Direction by Ray McCarey. 20th Century-Fox.

Following a familiar Hollywood film pattern, a socially ambitious mother engineers her daughter's engagement to the season's catch only to have her fall in love with someone who miraculously proves to be a greater prize. The plot is not too important. It gives an excuse for the antics of Charlotte Greenwood and the absent-minded comedy of Charlie Ruggles, which sometimes rise to hilarious pitches. While the film does not rate above B classification, it has its bright moments and is possible for an hour of relaxation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless if they are interested

❖

PLAYMATES ◇ ◇

Kay Kyser, John Barrymore, Lupe Velez, Ginny Simms, May Robson, Patsy Kelly, Peter Lind Hayes, George Cleveland, Alice Fleming, Kay Kyser's Band. Direction by David Butler. RKO-Radio.

John Barrymore washes his dirty linen in public and emphasizes his failings by a flash-back to his days of greatness, a perfect delivery of Hamlet's soliloquy. Kay Kyser puts his second-best foot forward, while the rest of a noisy cast support these principals in a typical radio plot anent the marriage of Shakespeare and swing. The entertainment level is raised a few notches by several good orchestra numbers and songs, including the timely "Thank Your Lucky Stars and Stripes," but this is not enough to satisfy anyone but confirmed radio fans.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 Not very suitable

❖

REMEMBER THE DAY ◇ ◇

Claudette Colbert, John Payne, John Shepperd, Ann Todd, Douglas Croft, Jane Seymour, Anne Revere, Frieda Inescourt, Harry Hayden, Francis Pierlot, Marie Blake. Based on the play by Philo Higley and Philip Dunning. Screen play by Tess Slesinger, Frank Davis and Allan Scott. Direction by Henry King. 20th Century-Fox.

Like "Cheers for Miss Bishop," this is the story of a woman with a genius for teaching, but it is treated in a different way. When the film opens we meet *Nora Trinell*, "a gray-haired woman with a beautiful smile," edging her way into the throng at the Washington headquarters of the presidential nominee, *Dewey Roberts*. Then the scene fades back to a year of his boyhood to show how the inspiration and the love and guidance of *Miss Trinell* formed the starting point of his career. She had not planned to dedicate her life to teaching. During the same year she met and loved the handsome young athletic director, and there was a summer and a Christmas vacation filled with high hopes and bright romance before he was called away to the first World War. While Claudette Colbert makes *Nora Trinell* a lovely, vital person, it is not her picture alone, for John Payne as her lover and Douglas Croft as the impressionable, idealistic boy, give equally fine performances, and minor roles are good. The period of 1917 is fixed by clothes and settings and current social customs. The main criticism of the picture is that the details are so accurate that occasionally, as in the bathing suit scene, the action verges upon caricature.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Needs older evaluation

❖

ROAD AGENT ◇ ◇

Dick Foran, Leo Carrillo, Andy Devine, Anne Nagel. Universal.

An average, typical Western with the stereotyped plot—Wells Fargo agent, stage coach holdup, riding, shooting and humor provided by Leo Carrillo and Andy Devine. Dick Foran sings pleasingly and western scenery is expertly photographed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS ◇ ◇

John Boles, Mona Barrie, Billy Lee, Roscoe Karns, Lillian Elliot, Paul Porcasi, Sam Flint, Brandon Hurst, Byron Folger, Selmar Jackson, Harlan Tucker, Antonio Filauri. From the American Magazine story "First Performance" by Matt Taylor. Direction by Phil Rosen. Musical direction by Edward Kay. Monogram Pictures.

Returning to the screen, John Boles plays in a delightful picture with young Billy Lee. They are very natural and appealing in the relationship of father and son, without becoming oversentimental. When *Jeff Carter* enters the U. S. after a period of voice study abroad, he finds that his wife has divorced him and is neglecting their child, and then begins his two-fold struggle of earning a living for *Danny* and finding an opportunity for his introduction as an opera singer. Mona Barrie has a thankless part, a hard, ambitious woman with so little maternal instinct

that her performance might leave a feeling of insecurity with children who see the film, although her attitude serves to highlight the devotion of father and son. John Boles' voice is beautiful in various numbers: "America," "Danny Boy" and selections from opera. The director has handled his story material well, and there is more genuine human interest than is found in many more pretentious films.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Might have a bad effect

❖

SEALED LIPS ◇ ◇

William Gargan, John Litel, Anne Nagel, Ralf Harold, Mary Gordon. Universal.

This detective melodrama has a new twist which makes it interesting. A district attorney suspects that a notorious gangster, supposedly serving a term in a California jail, is not the man held. He assigns a detective to investigate, and with the aid of a lip-reading assistant and a newspaper reporter he uncovers the hoax. While rather improbable, the plot is fast-moving, and photography and good acting heighten the effectiveness.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

SHANGHAI GESTURE ◇ ◇

Gene Tierney, Walter Huston, Victor Mature, Ona Munson, Phyllis Brooks, Albert Basserman, Maria Ouspenskaya, Eric Blore, Ivan Lebedeff, Mike Mazurki, Clyde Fillmore, Grayce Hampton, Rex Evans, Mikhail Rasumni, Michael Delmataff, Marcel Delio. From the play by John Colton. Adapted by Joseph von Sternberg with the collaboration of Geza Herczeg, Karl Vollmoeller and Jules Furthman. Direction by Josef von Sternberg. Music composed and conducted by Richard Hageman. Produced by Arnold Pressburger. United Artists Release.

The familiar, sordid story of the oriental woman who avenges her unhappy past through her own daughter, is given lavish and exciting atmosphere in the screen version of a play popular over twenty years ago. The elaborate settings, the excellent musical score with oriental motifs, and the polyglot types of character extras enliven the production and give the creaky plot whatever interest it may hold for modern audiences.

The leading characters are all despicable people. Gene Tierney plays the girl who, with all her training and advantages, has only cheap emotions; Walter Huston, her father, who has money but a rotten soul; Victor Mature, the insidious Levantine mystic (in lieu of the Japanese diplomat in the original); Phyllis Brooks, a hard-boiled chorus girl stranded in Shanghai; Ona Munson, *Madame Gin Sling*, the evil woman who controls the human puppets to avenge herself on the whole white race. They all play their roles well, but the dialogue at times seems stilted and direction fails to make the production a vital or important picture of life.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

STEEL AGAINST THE SKY ◇ ◇

Alexis Smith, Lloyd Nolan, Craig Stevens, Gene Lockhart, Edward Ellis, Walter Catlett, Howard da Silva, Edward Brophy, Julie Bishop. Direction by A. Edward Sutherland.

This is one of those unfortunate pictures which bring credit to no one. The slapstick is so forced that it is seldom funny, and the hairbreadth escapes are so exaggerated that they lack conviction. The plot is hackneyed and the acting routine. The general idea of the film is to glorify the construction men in the building of a great modern bridge such as those at San Francisco, and whatever value it may possess is in the photographic studies of the towers, the catwalks and cables of the giant span.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mediocre

Children, 8 to 12 Too harrowing for them

❖

TARZAN'S SECRET TREASURE ❖ ◇

Johnny Weismuller, Maureen O'Sullivan, John Sheffield, Reginald Owen, Barry Fitzgerald, Tom Conway, Philip Dorn, Cordell Hickman. Original screen play by Myles Connolly and Paul Gangelin based on characters created by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Directed by Richard Thorpe. Produced by B. P. Fineman. M.-G.-M.

Tarzan, Jane and *Boy* swing through the trees with abandon, display their remarkable ability in under water swimming and repair to their sylvan abode to eat an idealistic repast of caviar, eggs the size of grapefruit and grapes as big as apricots. *Boy* plays with his precocious ape companion, *Chita*, and rides his baby elephant while repulsing lions, tigers and hyenas with well-aimed gold nuggets hurled from a sling-shot. When *Boy* learns that these nuggets are valued by civilized man he ventures too far in search of more and falls into the hands of savages from whose indescribable cruelties he is saved by a safari of white men who, in turn, become equally ruthless in their greed for gold. Thus *Tarzan* as usual has to rescue both *Boy* and *Jane* from horrifying danger.

The first sequences are entertaining because of their imaginative quality. The later scenes stress barbaric cruelty of both natives and white men. The encounter with man-eating crocodiles is terrifying. The picture is less successful than the previous one because of its overemphasis on horror.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste but of doubtful interest

Children, 8 to 12 Not recommended

THEY DIED WITH THEIR BOOTS ON ◇ ◇

Errol Flynn, Olivia de Haviland, Arthur Kennedy, Charley Grapewin, Gene Lockhart, Anthony Quinn, Stanley Ridges, John Litel, Walter Hampden, Sydney Greenstreet, Regis Toomey, Hattie McDaniel, George P. Huntley Jr., Frank Wilcox, Joseph Sawyer, Minor Watson. Original screen play by Wally Kline and Aeneas MacKenzie. Music by Max Steiner. Direction by Raoul Walsh. Warner Bros.-First National.

Since Custer's memory was perpetuated for many years by gaudy chromos in public places and by the side shows of the circus, it is high time that a sympathetic biography of his life should be popularized. He was a rugged individual in every sense of the word, and according to this version, managed to flout discipline even in the army and do very much as he pleased. When he left West Point his scholastic record was the worst made by anyone since Ulysses S. Grant, but his horsemanship and sword play were brilliant. Naturally, some of his superiors hated him, while others were so captivated by his initiative and versatility that he was promoted over the heads of many officers. At Gettysburg, as Brigadier General, his swift decision to lead a series of cavalry charges was instrumental in saving the day for the North. After a period of retirement, during which he married the lovely protegee of General Sherman, he again entered the army and was sent to a frontier garrison in the Dakotas; there he whipped the 7th Cavalry into shape, and was so just and so capable in dealing with the Indians that for a while there was peace in the territory. Then dishonest promoters started a false rumor of gold in the Black Hills, brought in a stream of settlers to the land promised to the Sioux, discredited Custer to get him out of the way. When he returned, he realized that the only way to save the settlers was to pit his 7th Cavalry against the Indians and to sacrifice them to the last man, thereby giving time for the large regular army force to get into action. After his death, his treaty with the Sioux was upheld.

This is a stirring picture of war, battles for glory and for a just cause, the romantic colorful war of yesterday. The cavalry charges are magnificent; it is amazing that horses can plunge and leap and fall without carrying themselves and their riders to destruction, but according to studio facts, they can. While the Indian warfare is awe-inspiring, it is not necessarily gruesome, and because everyone knows from history that Custer's troops were massacred, the end does not bring a feeling of overwhelming tragedy.

Errol Flynn portrays Custer with dash and enthusiasm, as a man of action with a high sense of justice. The various men's parts are well taken and show great variety from Anthony Quinn as Crazy Horse to Sydney Greenstreet as General Winfield Scott. Olivia de Haviland is charming, but she seems overcostumed for a picture of war and the frontier, even if she was known as one of the best-dressed women of her time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Too exciting

❖

THREE GIRLS ABOUT TOWN ◇ ◇

Joan Blondell, Binnie Barnes, Janet Blair, John Howard, Robert Benchley, Eric Blore, Hugh O'Connell, Una O'Connor. Original screen play by Richard Carroll. Directed by Leigh Jason. Columbia Pictures.

A farce in which the action is so fast and furious that it is fairly hysterical takes place in a convention hotel catering to all sorts of people from magicians to morticians. Two sisters (Joan Blondell and Binnie Barnes) as co-hostesses find themselves in a peck of trouble when they discover a corpse in a room adjoining theirs. From then on they are alternately aided and disturbed by the efforts of a newspaper man and their young sister fresh from boarding school. The ending comes as a surprise punch. While this film is not outstanding, good dialogue and some genuine comedy make it better than others of its class.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Little value **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

❖

TWO FACED WOMAN ◇ ◇

Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas, Constance Bennett, Roland Young, Ruth Gordon, Robert Sterling, Frances Carson. Screen play by S. N. Behrman, Salka Viertel and George Oppenheimer, suggested by a play by Ludwig Fulda. Direction by George Cukor. Produced by Gottfried Reinhardt. M.G.M.

The plot given Greta Garbo is doubtless conceived to display her versatility, but it is heavy-handed stuff. The broad farce concerns a bride who soon discovers that the man she has married is unwilling to give up his gay, sophisticated New York existence for the simple outdoor Western life she loves. She follows him to New York and, masquerading as her own twin sister, glamorous, seductive and unconventional, she vies with another woman and wins him back by sex appeal.

Many of the lines are coarse, and Miss Garbo's costumes, in attempting to be daring, succeed in being very unbecoming. The script and direction lack the light touch necessary for clever entertainment and are not suited to the star's gift for deft and subtle comedy. It is duller rather than more immoral than many other films dealing with the same situation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

THE VANISHING VIRGINIAN ◇ ◇

Frank Morgan, Kathryn Grayson, Spring Byington, Natalie Thompson, Douglass Newland, Mark Daniels, Elizabeth Patterson, Juanita Quigley, Spotty Beckett, Dickie Jones, Leigh Whipper, Louise Beavers, J. M. Kerrigan, Harlan Briggs, Katherine Alexander. Based on the book by Rebecca Yancey Williams. Screen play by Jan Fortune. Direction by Frank Borzage. Produced by Edwin Knopf. M.G.M.

The *Yanceys* are a vivid and turbulent family living in a small town in Virginia in 1913 and subsequent years. *Father*, prosecuting attorney for many terms, is definitely the head of the house, shouting "Bilious Bonaparte" and demanding order when things go wrong. But *Rosa*, his wife, sweetly goes her own way, and all the children manage to express their individualities. Once or twice the action gets out of hand and is too farcical for reality, but the picture is acted and directed with such a keen understanding of human nature that it is far superior to most films on family life. The protective attitude of the *Yanceys* toward their colored servants and the genuine devotion on the other side is particularly well drawn, typical also of a vanishing and perhaps happier time. Frank Morgan is grand as *Mr. Yancey*, Spring Byington quietly efficient as *Rosa*, and the lovely voice of Kathryn Grayson as well as the exuberance of all the young members of the cast adds to the pleasure of the picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Yes, if interested. Probably interesting

❖

WEEK-END FOR THREE ◇ ◇

Dennie O'Keefe, Jane Wyatt, Philip Reed, Edw. E. Horton, Zasu Pitts, Franklin Pangborn, Marion Martin. Story by Budd Schulberg. Screen play by Dorothy Parker and Alan Campbell. Direction by Irving Reis. Produced by Tay Garnett. R.K.O.-Radio.

When pretty *Ellen Craig* uses a former suitor to arouse her busy husband's jealousy, her ruse acts as a boomerang. *Randy* is so appallingly energetic that he wears them both out and is so incorrigibly friendly that he accepts no rebuffs. As his visit goes on and on, he monopolizes their household and their lives until they become desperate. This is very good material for comedy, and an able cast makes the most of the situation for three-quarters of the play; the other quarter is repetitious. Excessive drinking and some suggestive lines could be cut to advantage.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Needs adult evaluation

Children, 8 to 12 No

THE WOLF MAN ◇ ◇

Claude Rains, Lon Chaney, Warren William, Ralph Bellamy, Patric Knowles, Bela Lugosi, Maria Ouspenskaya, Evelyn Ankers, J. M. Kerrigan, Fay Helm, Forrester Harvey. Original screen play by Curt Siodmak. Director of photography, Joseph Valentine. Art Director, Jack Otterson. Direction by George Waggner. Universal.

The ancient legend of the werewolf is given a modern setting and psychological interpretation in this exceedingly well produced melodrama. The portrayal of the constant struggle between good and evil in man's soul and the demoralizing effect of suggestion on a diseased mind paralyzed by fear, rises to dramatic heights, and while the picture may be classed as a "horror" film, acting, directing and photography make it a most unusual production of its class.

Lon Chaney plays the role of a younger son, who, after years in America, returns to take his place as heir of an English estate. On a pleasure jaunt to a gypsy camp, he kills what he believes to be a wolf when it attacks and slays one of his party. Next day a gypsy is found dead. The shock unhinges his mind, and constantly reiterated stories of the werewolf legend convince him that he himself has become the terrible creature of folklore. Lon Chaney gives a superb performance, making the character sympathetic and profoundly tragic. His make-up as the werewolf is shocking but not too fantastic, and photography makes the transition to human form believable. Maria Ouspenskaya is sinister and moving as well. Claude Rains, Warren William and Ralph Bellamy give excellent support. The picture is horrible but fascinating in its treatment of the theme.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 Bad

SHORT SUBJECTS

CHANGED IDENTITY ◇ ◇

"Miniature" Series. M.G.M.

Like a short-short story, this movie tells a complete tale in a limited space. Two brothers, identical twins of malignant character, come to grief when their crimes coincide in nature and the date of commission. It is a grim picture but interesting and well performed. Adults.

❖

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS ◇ ◇

Technicolor Cartoon. M.G.M.

Brimming over with Christmas spirit, this colorful picture relates the adventures of a tiny mouse who revels in a roomful of wonderful toys until a cat arrives to spoil his fun. Especially good for children.

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FEBRUARY
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FEATURE FILMS

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All Through the Night
Bahama Passage
Blue White and Perfect
The Bugle Sounds
Design for Scandal
Dr. Kildare's Victory
Four Jacks and a Jill
A Gentleman at Heart
Joe Smith, American
Johnny Eager
Man From Headquarters
The Man Who Came to Dinner
Mr. and Mrs. North
Right to the Heart
Salute to Courage
Snuffy Smith, Yardbird
Son of Fury
Young America
Valley of the Sun
Woman of the Year

SHORT SUBJECT

Soldiers in White

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FEATURE FILMS

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT ◇ ◇

Humphrey Bogart, Conrad Veidt, Kaaren Verne, Jane Darwell, Frank McHugh, Peter Loree, Judith Anderson, William Demarest, Jackie C Gleason, Phil Silvers, Wally Ford, Barton MacLane. Screen play by Leonard Spigelgass and Edwin Gilbert from a story by Leonard Q. Ross and Leonard Spigelgass. Music by Adolph Deutsch. Direction by Vincent Sherman. Warner Bros.

A group of gangsters fighting their own inter-gang battles, suddenly find themselves in possession of clues concerning a great spy ring of Nazi Fifth Columnists. When the police unfortunately consider their suspicions unfounded, the gangsters, forgetting their rivalry, prove their fundamental Americanism by handling the situation themselves.

The plot is timely, and the staging, direction, acting, and photography are excellent, with Humphrey Bogart carrying off stellar honors. The script writers have cleverly combined sure-fire elements, exciting gangster activities, Nazi espionage, night club entertainment, and humor of the Brooklyn wisecracking variety, into fast moving, suspenseful entertainment. The humor comes as rather a surprise in so serious a film, but its skillful interjection relaxes the audience without clouding the vital theme, thus avoiding some of the tense horror other propaganda films have aroused. The production is first rate melodrama with a patriotic flavor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Exciting but good if they like this type

Children, 8 to 12 Too complex and frightening

BAHAMA PASSAGE ◇ ◇

Madeleine Carroll, Stirling Hayden, Flora Robson, Leo G. Carroll, Mary Anderson, Cecil Kellaway, Leigh Whipper, Dorothy Dandridge. Screen play by Virginia Van Upp, based on a story by Nelson Hayes. Produced and directed by Edward H. Griffith. Paramount.

About all that this picture has to offer is beautiful, soft-toned technicolor of sandy shores, blue water and sky, and sun tanned Madeleine Carroll looking like a Palm Beach ad. The story is poor with unbelievably bad dialogue that alternates between stilted inanities and broad innuendoes. It is mostly about an unmannerly young man (owner of a remote salt island) and a supersophisticated, rather shopworn young woman who all too obviously hankers after his affections. Of course, she finally lands him in spite of the fact that he is already married and that he has struggled manfully and with all the rudeness he could muster to elude her.

The rest of the plot concerns itself with the young man's feeling of responsibility towards the island natives, who have served his family faithfully for generations, and who are being goaded to violence by the stupid tyranny of the new overseer, the father of the girl. The picture is likely to disappoint those who enjoyed Nelson Hayes' story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 No

BLUE WHITE AND PERFECT ◇ ◇

Lloyd Nolan, Mary Beth Hughes, Helene Reynolds, George Reeves Steve Geray, Henry Victor, Curt Bois, Mae Marsh, Charles Williams. Screen play by Samuel G. Engel, based on the character "Michael Shayne," created by Brett Halliday. Direction by Herbert I. Leeds. Sol M Wurtzel producer. 20th Century-Fox.

In this episode in the popular *Michael Shayne* adventures, *Michael* decides to enter defense work in order to pacify his fiancee, who rebels at his dangerous and impecunious career of private detective. But on his first day in the factory an assignment of rough diamonds is stolen and the expert in charge is found slugged and bleeding. *Shayne* suspects this man, and in the ensuing action follows the trail alone through exciting and perilous situations.

This is a fast moving action film in which logic is frequently sacrificed for melodrama. It seems fantastic to have *Shayne* assume the entire responsibility, especially when his action is found to conflict with the F. B. I. If any is needed, this is proof that individuals should cooperate with the Government agencies for the greater benefit of National Defense. As pure fiction, however, the story holds interest with a fine performance by Curt Bois highlighting the action. Helene Reynolds is good, too, as a confederate in the sabotage plot. Mary Beth Hughes is seen in a shrewish role, and if *Shayne* is ever allowed to marry his girl we may expect further fireworks to enliven their "married bliss."

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12
No; too suggestive of peril

✣

THE BUGLE SOUNDS ◇ ◇

Wallace Beery, Marjory Main, Lewis Stone, George Bancroft, Henry O'Neil, Donna Reed, Chill Wills, William Lundigan, Tom Dugan, Guinn Williams, Ernest Whitman, Jerome Cowan, Jonathan Hale. Screen play by Cyril Humes, based on story by Lawrence Kimble and Cyril Hume. Direction by S. Sylvan Simon with the cooperation of the United States Army. Produced by J. Walter Ruben. M.-G.-M.

While Wallace Beery never fails to create a screen character who is ludicrously uncouth and invariably in trouble because of his stubborn individualism, he is given here a really sympathetic role. The theme is timely and the cooperation of the U. S. Army makes the film an informative picture of draftee training.

Patrick Aloysius Doan, known as *Hap*, is a first sergeant in the 19th U. S. Cavalry, with twenty-nine years of illustrious service behind him. His devotion to the cavalry suffers severe shock when he learns that his unit is to be mechanized and he is to train draftees. But in spite of pronounced aversion to his task and loud criticism of tanks as "machine guns on kiddie cars," he takes it on and does it well. Suddenly in a practice maneuver with tanks one bursts into flames and smashes into the stable where *Hap's* beloved horse *Cantigne* is housed. *Hap* goes crazy mad and is court-martialed for his behavior. The ensuing action is exciting, and the surprise ending should not be divulged.

Wallace Beery make *Hap Doan* a rough but likable soldier, and the cast is excellent. A slight romance does not complicate the main theme, which is that of training mechanized units and preventing sabotage in National Defense. It is good propaganda at this time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Good

Children, 8 to 12
Exciting

✣

DESIGN FOR SCANDAL ◇ ◇

Rosalind Russell, Walter Pidgeon, Edward Arnord, Lee Bowman, Jean Rogers, Mary Beth Hughes, Guy Kibbe, Barbara Jo Allen, Leon Belasco, Bobby Larson, Charles Coleman, Thurston Hall. Original screen play by Lionel House. Direction by Norman Taurog. Produced by John W. Considine, Jr. M.-G.-M.

This is suave and rather cynical farce. It has a sophisticated plot concerning a woman judge who rules in favor of the wife in an unsavory divorce case. A reporter offers to help his boss, the divorced man, get the alimony reduced by finding the "Achilles heel" which he believes every woman possesses. His attempts to involve the judge in scandal are detected, for the gal is not easily taken in.

Walter Pidgeon's role of the reporter could have been detestable in less capable hands, but he carries it off so lightly that he gives it the stamp of his own ingratiating personality. Rosalind Russell is pleasing, and others play their parts satisfactorily. Most audiences will accept the film at its face value and will be lightly entertained by its inventive absurdities.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12
Unsuitable

✣

DR. KILDARE'S VICTORY ◇ ◇

Lew Ayres, Lionel Barrymore, Ann Ayars, Robert Sterling, Jean Rogers, Alma Kruger, Walter Kingsford, Nell Craig, Edward Gargan. Screen play by Harry Ruskin and Willis Goldberg from story by Joseph Harrington, based upon characters created by Max Brand. Direction by W. S. Van Dyke, II. M.-G.-M.

In order to connect this episode with the foregoing ones of the series, the opening sequences are static. *Dr. Gillespie* points out at some length that nothing has as yet blocked out the tragedy which altered *Doctor Kildare's* life when his fiancee was killed

the day of their wedding. However, the young doctor is carrying on to the best of his ability. The plot is chiefly concerned with his work in the hospital, climaxed by the resuscitation of a vampish actress who uses her wiles on him without avail. We are not entirely sure whether the title refers to his successful avoidance of the complication, as he comes away unscathed by lipstick, but no doubt this is too facetious an interpretation. In this episode Mr. Van Dyke has concentrated on scientific skill and hospital technique rather than on plot, and the character played by Lew Ayres has become more mature and sympathetic than he used to be.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 If interested — **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

✣

FOUR JACKS AND A JILL ◇ ◇

Ray Bolger, Anne Shirley, June Havoc, Desi Arnaz, Eddie Foy, Jr., Fritz Feld, Henry Daniel, Jack Briggs, William Blees, Robert Smith, Fortunio Bonarova. Screen play by John Twist, suggested by story "The Viennese Charmer" by W. Carey Wonderly. Direction by Jack Hively. RKO.

A small swing band lands a job when its singer pretends to be intimate with royalty. The slight plot is enlivened with good tunes and the clever dancing of Ray Bolger.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Pleasant musical — **Children, 8 to 12** Matter of taste

✣

A GENTLEMAN AT HEART ◇ ◇

Cesar Romero, Carole Landis, Milton Berle, J. Carrol Naish, Richard Derr, Rose Hobart, Jerome Cowan, Elisha Cook, Jr., Francis Pierlot, Chick Chandler, Steve Geray, Matt McHugh. Screen play based on story "Masterpiece" by Paul Hervey Fox. Direction by Ray McCarey. 20th Century-Fox.

The cast turns in a more finished performance than is merited by the story. A bookie accepts an art gallery in payment of a debt, and after he is victimized by a shady dealer, capitalizes on his bad luck by going into the business of selling bogus masterpieces. This works very well indeed until he tangles with the U. S. Government; then a belated revival of conscience saves him from the danger of punishment. There is enough novelty in the situation and enough comedy to provide fair entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No particular value — **Children, 8 to 12** No

✣

JOE SMITH, AMERICAN ◇ ◇

Robert Young, Marsha Hunt, Darryl Hickman, Harvey Stephens, Jonathan Hale, Noel Madison, Don Costello, Joseph Anthony, William Forrest, Russell Hicks, Mark Daniels, William Tannen. Screen play by Allen Rivkin, based on story by Paul Gallico. Direction by Richard Thorpe. Produced by Jack Chertok. M.-G.-M.

This is the kind of picture which will inspire people to cheer because it takes the man behind the scenes and makes him as much of a hero as the man in the military forces. *Joe Smith* is a skilled aircraft worker, exceptionally clear headed, observing and close mouthed. Given the important job of installing the secret bomb sight, he is attacked and cruelly beaten by German Fifth Columnists in an attempt to force him to divulge information to the enemy. He proves his mettle. Interwoven with the main theme is the simple home life of a young family of three. *Joe's* courageous resistance is bolstered by his deliberate recollections of his own clean past. Throughout his ordeal he forces his thoughts back to the high lights of his life: his meeting with *Mary*, his wife; her unselfish devotion in their home life; his son, whose Americanism is being fostered daily under the influence of school experiences; all the little daily happenings which make life worth while. These cut backs break into, but do not lessen, the suspense, for *Joe* is the average American who is totally unprepared for the tactics of the Gestapo. When he finally escapes, the pursuit of the criminals is an exciting and satisfying climax made plausible by *Joe's* clever powers of observation of small clues which a less intelligent and less analytical person would have overlooked under strain. Paul Gallico has applied his reporting ability in outlining the story. He has caught the news value of the "little man," the drama in ordinary day by day living which under unusual circumstances climaxes in heroism.

The cast is uniformly excellent and the direction fine. Because *Joe* is the kind of person we all may know, he encourages the morale of those of us who cannot don a uniform but who can otherwise meet the challenge for loyalty in America's need.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent — **Children, 8 to 12** Very emotional

✣

JOHNNY EAGER ◇ ◇

Robert Taylor, Lana Turner, Edward Arnold, Van Heflin, Patricia Dane, Henry O'Neill, Robert Sterling, Glenda Farrell, Diana Lewis. Screen play by John Lee Mahin and James Edward Grant, based on original story by James Grant. Produced by John W. Considine, Jr. Direction by Mervyn Le Roy. M.-G.-M.

Johnny Eager is a thoroughly despicable character, a paroled convict who uses his job as a taxi driver to cloak his activities as a vicious gang leader. A chance meeting with *Lisbeth*, the daughter of the district attorney responsible for his conviction, offers him the opportunity he has been seeking. He stages a mock murder, convinces the girl that she is guilty and through her crushes the prosecutor's opposition to an illegal dog-racing concession. In the end *Johnny's* heart is so touched that he tries to prove to *Lisbeth* that she is innocent, and ironically enough

his one unselfish act proves his undoing. While the film is packed with dynamic action, it never rings true because one finds difficulty in believing that Robert Taylor in the part of *Johnny Eager* is an utterly wicked person. Lana Turner shows emotional strength. and maturity. However, the most unusual performance is offered by Van Heflin as a perpetually imbibing, philosophical "Boswell," instigator of the one kind act of the gangster's life. His lines contain gems of subtle wit and give flavor and warmth to the film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MAN FROM HEADQUARTERS ◇ ◇

Frank Albertson, Joan Woodbury, Dick Elliott, Byron Folger, John Maxwell, Robert Kellard, Mel Ruick, Jack Mulhall, Paul Bryar, Max Hoffman, Jr., Arthur O'Connell. Screen play by John Krafft and Rollo Lloyd. Direction by Jean Yarbrough. Produced by Lindsley Parsons. Monogram Pictures.

This newspaper-detective story has interest, but it suffers from loose ends and poor dialogue. An ace reporter who has aided the police in uncovering those responsible for a number of crimes is given a revolver by the grateful force. The criminal gang, thinking him too dangerous to have around, kidnap him and put him on a train for St. Louis. There, without money or identification papers, he becomes involved in a situation which calls for ingenuity on his part to save himself. All ends well, of course, and romance is included for good measure. More originality in direction would have made the film better, but it will meet with approval from many audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Usual crook melodrama
Children, 8 to 12 Not suitable

❖

THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER ◇ ◇

Monty Woolley, Bette Davis, Ann Sheridan, Richard Travis, Jimmy Durante, Billie Burke, Reginald Gardiner, Grant Mitchell, Elizabeth Fraser, George Barbier, Mary Wickes, Laura Hope Crews. Screen play by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein. From stage play by George Kaufman and Moss Hart. Direction by William Keigley. Produced by Hal B. Wallis. Warner Bros.

Those familiar with the play will find its screen adaptation equally entertaining. Others will be shocked into irrepressible laughter by this astounding episode in the career of a supreme egoist. It is rumored that the inspiration for the story of the man who came to dinner and remained as an unwelcome and tyrannical house guest, was Mr. Alexander Woollcott, who even played the role on the stage for several months, thereby showing his appreciation of the irreverent burlesque. In any event, the character of *Sheridan Whiteside* is not easy to forget. On the lecture platform he is supposed to dispense charm, wit, and intellectual stimulus. He consorts with the great and the near great. But in private life his ribald sense of humor, his absolute disregard of decent social amenities make *Whiteside* so startling that he is the perfect monstrosity, a veritable museum piece.

Little change has been made from the original play. Although the dialogue has been altered to conform with screen requirements, it is still smartly sophisticated. A few additional scenes enlarge the scope of the action and remove the limitations of a single set. The cast has been superbly chosen. Monty Woolley has been drafted from the New York company and he is a most sagacious choice. Bette Davis plays his secretary and gives the role a worldly touch which is not incompatible with the contrasting womanly side of a girl in love. Ann Sheridan is good as the gold-digging actress, hard as nails, but alluring in the role of siren. Reginald Gardiner has a sophisticated part which he carries off to perfection, and Jimmy Durante is well cast as *Banjo*, the oddity from Hollywood. In fact, it is an all-star cast whose performance gives credence to a plot which is a nightmare of hilarious improbabilities.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MR. AND MRS. NORTH ◇ ◇

Gracie Allen, William Post, Jr., Paul Kelly, Rose Hobart, Virginia Grey, Inez Cooper, Jerome Cowan Tom Conway, Felix Bressart, Porter Hall, Lucien Littlefield, Keye Luke, Stuart Crawford. Screen play by S. K. Lauren from play by Owen Davis based on stories by Richard and Frances Lockridge, Direction by Robert B. Sinclair. Produced by Irving Asher. M.-G.-M.

Lively incidents and the blythe idiocy of Gracie Allen carry this murder mystery at a fast pace and compensate for the lack of the traditional method of unravelling clues and piling up facts. The suspense doesn't consist so much in "who dunit?" as in "What's gonna happen next?" *Mrs. North* goes to meet her husband at the railroad station, or at least she starts. They finally meet, go home, open a closet door, and out falls a body. Thus begins the cockeyed action during which an opening door becomes a distinct menace to audiences' peace of mind. Gracie is so secretive and so "helpful" in shielding friends that the role of her husband, played by William Post, Jr., is a distinct achievement, as Mr. Post retains his dignity and poise throughout the screwball action. Others handle their parts well in spite of the fact that Gracie dominates the picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes; entertaining
Children, 8 to 12 Exciting; possibly confusing

RIGHT TO THE HEART ◇ ◇

Brenda Joyce, Joseph Allen, Jr., Cobina Wright, Jr., Stanley Clements, Don De Fore, Hugh Beaumont Charles D. Brown, Ethel Griffies, Frank Orth, Phil Tead, William Haade, Spencer Charters. Screen play by Walter Bullock, based on story by Harold MacGrath. Direction by Eugene Forde. 20th Century-Fox.

This is a comedy dealing mainly with the reclamation of an essentially worth while chap to better physical condition, a better moral outlook, and a finer girl friend. The story bogs down in places and is never very convincing, but it will serve to fill a place acceptably on a double bill. Stanley Clemens plays an egotistical, brash young man who is irritating beyond words, but he definitely steals the picture for what it's worth.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair **Children, 8 to 12** Fair

◆

SALUTE TO COURAGE ◇ ◇

Conrad Veidt, Ann Ayers, Frank Reicher, Dorothy Tree, Ivan Simpson, William Tannen, Martin Kosleck, Marc Lawrence, Sidney Blackmer, Moroni Olsen, Pierre Watkin. Screen play by Paul Gangelin and John Meehan, Jr., based upon an idea by Pothar Mendes. Direction by Jules Dassin. Produced by Irving Asher. M.-G.-M.

This is a better than average spy drama. An interesting situation is created when a man assumes the identity of his twin brother who has been a Nazi consul working in an American city and obtaining secrets of the American military and naval forces for his own government. Conrad Veidt plays a dual role. Gentle *Otto Becker,* collector of rare books and stamps, is a naturalized American citizen. His twin brother, *Baron Von Detner,* is the Nazi consul. The *Baron* visits *Otto* at his shop and coerces him into allowing his shop to be used as a center for the exchange of secret code messages. When *Otto* tries to inform the F. B. I. he is found out and in an ensuing struggle he shoots and kills the *Baron.* He then impersonates the dead *Baron* and until the masquerade is discovered he manages to expose the plots to the F. B. I. A woman spy supplies the romantic touch, doubtless considered essential, but the picture would have been much stronger without this angle of the plot.

Conrad Veidt is such a finished actor that he gives suavity and tone to the picture and makes the somewhat implausible situation quite convincing. The script is well-written and the supporting cast is good. There is no torturing of victims shown and none suggested other than what we feel sure is in store for those who have tried to thwart the Nazi power.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Tense and emotional **Children, 8 to 12** No

SNUFFY SMITH, YARDBIRD ◇ ◇

Bud Duncan, Edgar Kennedy, Sarah Padden, J. Farrell MacDonald, Doris Linden, Jimmie Dodd, Pat McVeigh, Andraia Palmer, Frank Austin. Original screen play by John Grey, Jack Henley, Lloyd French and Doncho Hall, adapted from King Features Syndicate's copyrighted feature, "Barney Google and Snuffy Smith" by Billy DeBeck. Direction by Edward Cline. Produced by Edward Gross. Monogram Pictures.

Those familiar with the King Features cartoon will thoroughly enjoy these impersonations of the amusing caricatures, as will others who meet the characters for the first time. In contrast to many slapstick versions of Army life, frequently coarse, noisy and mocking, the humor here is gentle and human. *Snuffy* is a runt-sized moonshiner from the backwoods feudin' South. When he is rejected by the Army for physical deficiency, his accidental rescue of a general brings him an opportunity to wear the uniform as a messenger boy, and he finds himself under the supervision of his old enemy, the revenue officer. The central theme is concerned with the theft by an enemy civilian of a range finding invention and its recovery by *Snuffy* in the nick of time to save his side from humiliation in practice war maneuvers. The use of flour as ammunition instead of bullets makes an hilarious contribution to the fun, FOUR—PICTURE and a small dog which appears and disappears under dousing with "liquid spirits" adds to the amusement. He really should be listed in the credits.

The picture runs 67 minutes and compares favorably with Hal Roach's short feature on Army life. It should be a popular addition to any program.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Good

❖

SON OF FURY ◇ ◇

Tyrone Power, Gene Tierney, George Sanders, Frances Farmer, Roddy McDowall, John Carradine, Elsa Lanchester, Harry Davenport, Kay Johnson, Dudley Digges, Halliwell Hobbes, Marten Lamont. Screen play by Philip Dunne, based on the novel "Benjamin Blake" by Edison Marshall. Direction by John Cromwell. Music by Alfred Newman. 20th Century-Fox.

At least the first part of "Son of Fury" is high-flavored, romantic adventure, well-acted and beautifully photographed. It takes place in England at a time when a white man could be held as an indentured slave. Under this sorry system the boy, *Benjamin Blake,* is subjected to ignominy and brutal punishment by his powerful uncle, who, he believes, has usurped his title and estates. The keynote of *Ben's* life becomes a burning desire for revenge which he pursues with the relentlessness of the *Count of Monte Cristo* in Dumas' tale.

Roddy McDowall again evokes admiration in his perfect performance of a boy's part, and probably there is no better villain on the screen than George Sanders. When *Benjamin* becomes a man, the part is taken over by Tyrone Power, handsome and dashing as ever, but somewhat handicapped by the vagaries of the plot, for the action takes him to the South Sea Islands in search of a fortune in pearls. In contrast to the darkly realistic scenes of England, the marine gardens, the swaying dancers, the chieftain and even the beauteous Gene Tierney as a tropical charmer, seem pure Hollywood 1942. The best acting by a woman is that of Elsa Lanchester as a girl of the Bristol waterfront in a short but unforgettable episode with Tyrone Power. Throughout the film a fine musical score accompanies the action. Although there are moments of high suspense and most of the dramatic scenes are well-handled, there is too much violence. Oppression and vengeance alike are accomplished by bare-fisted battles of inhuman ferocity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 Too brutal

◆

YOUNG AMERICA ◇ ◇

Jane Withers, Jane Darwell, Lynne Roberts, Robert Cornell, William Tracy, Roman Bohnen, Irving Bacon, Ben Carter, Louise Beavers, Darryl Hickman. Original screen play by Samuel G. Engle. Direction Louis King. 20th Century-Fox.

Jane Withers in another of her problem child roles is cast as *Jane Campbell*, the spoiled daughter of a rich city man. She is sent to the country to live on her grandmother's farm and there, through the local Four H Club, learns to be a cooperative member of the community. As a vehicle for Jane Withers this picture is a step backwards, but it has some merit in the exploitation of a worthy and interesting organization.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mildly entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Little interest

❖

VALLEY OF THE SUN ◇ ◇

Lucille Ball, James Craig, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Dean Jagger, Peter Whitney, Billy Gilbert, Tom Tyler, Antonio Moreno, George Cleveland, Hank Bell, Richard Fiske. Screen play by Horace McCoy, based on Saturday Evening Post story by Clarence Budington Kelland. Direction by George Marshall. Photography by Harry Wild, A.S.C. Produced by Graham Baker. RKO.

George Marshall has been very successful in his treatment of Westerns. "When the Daltons Rode" and "Destry Rides Again" were both rip-roaring action films which gently but definitely kidded the subject matter and introduced so much humor that whatever violence was pictured was offset by the ludicrous. "Valley of the Sun" follows the same pattern, although it falls somewhat short of the excellence of the other films.

Jim Sawyer (Dean Jagger) is a dishonest Indian agent, time 1868. *Jonathan* (James Craig is the honorable scout who prevents the massacre plotted by the Indians for revenge. Comedy quite overshadows suspense. The spectacular Indian war dances and the superb photography of lovely desert country (Arizona and New Mexico) with gorgeous cloud effects add notes of interest. The film has enough color, laughter and action to insure popularity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Entertaining

❖

WOMAN OF THE YEAR ◇ ◇

Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, Fay Bainter, Reginald Owen, Minor Watson, William Bendix, Gladys Blake, Roscoe Karns, William Tannen, Ludwig Stossel, Sara Haden, Edith Evanson, George Kezas. Original screen play by Ring Lardner Jr., and Michael Kanin. Direction by George Stevens. Produced by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. M.-G.-M.

The problems of marriage between two professional people have been pretty thoroughly aired in farce recently, but "Woman of the Year" is not farce. It is serious drama enlivened by delightful comedy. A difficult adjustment confronts *Tess Harding* and her sports writer husband, *Sam Craig*, when the wife's absorption in her own work leads her to subordinate her husband's interests to the multitudinous duties and honors which inevitably follow her success. A dinner at which she is named "Woman of the Year" seems to her to mark her greatest achievement, but her husband's absence from the affair and her neglect of a refugee child she has taken into her home are a poignant commentary on her seeming triumph. The necessary adjustment calls for drastic action, which *Sam* is strong enough to take and which makes *Tess* at last aware of the significance of the wedding service and the loneliness of the path of fame.

Both Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy are at their best in their roles, and the supporting cast leaves nothing to be desired. In addition, the excellent script and the sound treatment of the theme make the picture unusually interesting and significant for adult audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated and mature in theme and treatment

Children, 8 to 12 No

SHORT SUBJECT

SOLDIERS IN WHITE ◇ ◇

William T. Orr, John Litel, Eleanor Parker. Original screen play by Owen Crump. Direction by B. Reaves Eason. Warner Bros.

In an attempt to sugar-coat a subject of general information pertaining to the training of medical men in the U. S. Army, a rather stupid story of a flirtatious nurse and a disgruntled interne has been added. The views in technicolor of Fort Sam Houston, the military hospital and army maneuvers are very interesting and well photographed. All ages.

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MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS

MARCH
1942

FEATURE FILMS

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The Adventures of Martin Eden
Born to Sing
Captains of the Clouds
Castle in the Desert
Dangerously They Live
Gyandev
The Invaders
Joan of Paris
The Lady Has Plans
The Lady Is Willing
Mr. Bug Goes to Town
"Mister V"
No Hands on the Clock
On the Sunny Side
The Remarkable Andrew
Roxie Hart
Song of the Islands
Sullivan's Travels
We Were Dancing
Wild Bill Hickok Rides
A Yank on the Burma Road

SHORT SUBJECTS

The California Junior Symphony
The Greenie
The New Spirit
We Do It Because

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FEATURE FILMS

THE ADVENTURES OF MARTIN EDEN ◇

Glenn Ford, Claire Trevor, Evelyn Keyes, Stuart Erwin, Dickie Moore, Ian MacDonald, Frank Conroy, Rafaela Ottiano, Pierre Watkin, Regina Wallace, Robert McDonald. Screen play by W. L. River, adapted from the novel by Jack London. Direction by Sidney Salkow. Columbia.

Only the faintest outline of Jack London's famous semi-biographical novel, "Martin Eden," has been retained in this film. The novel and the film stories are distinct entities, and the picture must be judged on its own merit. Because the plot is original and *Martin Eden* is not the conventional hero, it is more interesting than most films which stress violence. In the film, *Martin Eden* sees the horror of life at sea under the captaincy of a brutal bully. He keeps a diary, and when one of the crew is brought to trial for mutiny, he attempts to read this diary into the testimony as proof of the ill treatment of the crew. Thwarted on every hand, he meets *Ruth,* the daughter of the ship's owner, and through her tries to call attention to the injustice. She is attracted to him but unsympathetic to his literary efforts. He studies, starves, tries to reach the public through his pen; he almost gives up his objective because of his love for the girl, and then at last he readjusts himself and by perserverance and brute force, exposes the abuses, clears his friend's honor. In the end he gives up the girl whose standards differ too greatly from his own and turns to one who has a deeper, more honest sense of values.

The story is one of brutality, frustration and disillusionment. Glenn Ford is exceptionally fine in the lead, and Claire Trevor is excellent as the girl of the people, who loves him and influences him to hold to his original standards. Evelyn Keyes is a poor choice for *Ruth.* Whatever charm is expected from her is lost in a colorless characterization. Other characters from the novel are recognizable, although the parts they play in *Eden's* life are altered to conform to the film story. The ending differs from that of the novel in promising a happy solution for *Martin Eden.*

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 Too brutal in parts

❖

BORN TO SING ◇ ◇

Virginia Weidler, Ray McDonald, Douglas McPhail, Sheldon Leonard, "Rags" Ragland, Henry O'Neill, Larry Munn, Margaret Dumont. Screen play by Harry Clork and Franz G. Spencer, based on story by Franz G. Spencer. Direction by Edward Ludwig. M-G-M.

The much used plot about children who put on a show for some good cause and after terrible difficulties make a tremendous success, is getting shop worn. A gangster helps the kids in this one by shanghaing an audi-

ence to see it. The finale is a patriotic ensemble, modernistic in setting, and symbolizing the fusion of the different national and social elements which make up America today. However, the preceding action lessens its effect. The children are talented, Douglas McPhail sings beautifully, but the best cast in the world needs a good story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Boring for many

Children, 8 to 12 No interest

❖

CAPTAINS OF THE CLOUDS ◇ ◇

James Cagney, Dennis Morgan, Brenda Marshall, Alan Hale, George Tobias, Reginald Gardiner, Air Marshall W. A. Bishop, Reginald Denny, Paul Cavanaugh, Clem Bevens, J. M. Kerrigan, J. Farrell MacDonald, Willie Fung. Screen play by Arthur T. Horman, Richard Macaulay and Norman Reilly Raine, from a story by Arthur T. Horman and Roland Gillett. Directors of photography Sol. Polito, A.A.C., and Wilfred M. Cline, A.S.C. Music by Max Steiner. Direction by Michael Curtiz. Produced by Hal B. Wallis. Warner Bros.

Even if there were only magnificent Technicolor photography to recommend this film, it would be well worth seeing. But it also gives a stirring picture of the Royal Canadian Air Force in war preparation. It does this by showing the growth in character of a group of "bush" fliers from Northern Canada, who sign up after accidentally overhearing Winston Churchill's broadcast on "blood, sweat and tears." Only one of this group of experienced and daring fliers is accepted for pilot training. The others are over the age limit and must be content with ground work. To these individualists, and to *Brian McLean* (Jimmy Cagney) in particular, the need for self discipline, of sublimation of self to the greater war need, is a bitter lesson which in the end they learn. *McLean* sacrifices his life in protecting the fleet of bombers being ferried to England. The most moving documentary scene shows Air Marshall W. A. Bishop, in person, presenting wings to a graduating class of pilots recruited from all over the world. Among them are a number of American boys, and the scene is symbolic of the determined spirit of the United Nations to win victory in this fight for freedom.

The photography is exquisite: pictures of the wild, inaccessible and lovely northern "bush" country; stirring scenes of Canadian war effort; the moving and exciting flight of the bombers over the dark Atlantic. The film is memorable for its realism and its inspiring emphasis on character worth.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Exciting for some but informative and inspirational

CASTLE IN THE DESERT ◇ ◇

Sidney Toler, Arleen Whelan, Richard Derr, Douglas Dumbrille, Henry Daniell, Edmund MacDonald, Sen Yung, Lenita Lane, Ethel Griffies, Milton Parsons, Steve Geray, Lucien Littlefield. Screen play based on characters created by Earl Derr Biggers. Direction by Harry Lachman. 20th Century-Fox.

A strangely medieval castle built on the Mojave Desert in California is the setting for this mystery thriller. It is the home of a multimillionaire recluse and his wife, a descendant of the Borgias. Because a death has occurred under suspicious circumstances, *Charlie Chan* is summoned. Weird things begin to happen: drinks are poisoned, arrows are shot from unseen hands, and suits of armor walk about. But *Charlie* remains his usual, humorously imperturbable self and finally apprehends the would-be murderer. When the picture ends, the audience is not quite sure who did what or why, but for *Charlie Chan* devotees this is not important.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Not good for excitable youngsters

❖

DANGEROUSLY THEY LIVE ◇ ◇

John Garfield, Nancy Coleman, Raymond Massey, Lee Patrick, Moroni Olsen, Esther Dale, John Ridgely, Christian Rub, Frank Reicher, Ben Welden, Roland Drew. Direction by Robert Florey. Warner Bros.

While not so intriguing or so vivid as many others on the foreign agent theme, this is an exciting spy melodrama. Certainly it lives up to its title, for the young girl, *Jane Greystone*, and her friend *Dr. Lewis*, are in mortal danger up to the final moment. She is an operator for the British Intelligence, and he becomes interested in her when she is brought into a hospital as an apparent amnesia case. On the recommendation of a celebrated specialist, *Jane*, accompanied by *Dr. Lewis*, is removed to the estate of a man who claims to be her father, and there they are imprisoned while a formidable group of Nazis try to extort information concerning the route of a large convoy. The part of *Jane* is capably acted by Nancy Coleman; John Garfield is convincing, and Raymond Massey gives an outstanding interpretation of the specialist whose benevolent appearance masks a pitiless Nazi fanaticism. Pictures of the encounter at sea are sketchy with some of the views of submarines obviously done in miniature.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Better not. Tense with some brutality

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

GYANDEV ◇ ◇

"Light of India." Directed by Fatehlal and Damle. Produced by Ram Bagai in India with an all Indian cast.

"Gyandev" is a product of the motion picture industry of India and it is significant

because it shows what is considered entertainment in that country. While it does not reach the standard of American taste it is worthwhile because it is authentic India and because it pictures the development of a religious ideal.

Set in India about 1500 A. D., it tells the story of *Gyandev*, a child whose life and philosophy seem to parallel those of Christ. His father, shunned because he has left the priesthood to marry and have a family, finally commits suicide with his wife, thinking thus to atone for his sins. The children suffer untold hardships until *Gyandev* performs a miracle and the Brahman priests realize that he is indeed a messenger from Heaven. Excellent photography and a fine native cast give realism to the plot. The musical accompaniment, typically Indian, is appropriate but difficult for American ears to appreciate fully.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature

Children, 8 to 12 Too depressing

❖

THE INVADERS ◇ ◇

Laurence Olivier, Leslie Howard, Raymond Massey, Glynis Johns, Anton Walbrook, Eric Portman, Raymond Lovell, Niall MacGinnis, Richard George, Peter Moore, John Chandos, Basil Appleby, Findlay Currie, Theodore Salt, O. W. Fonger, and Canadians from every part of the Dominion. Original story by Emeric Pressburger. Screen play by Rodney Ackland and Emeric Pressburger. Produced and directed by Michael Powell. Produced in Montreal and Denham, England. Released in U. S. by Columbia Pictures.

Treated in a factual way with scant striving for dramatic effects, this picture has an unusual tone of reality. It is a narrative of the flight of a Nazi landing party from a destroyed submarine across the vast expanse of Canada from Hudson Bay to the Canadian Rockies. Arrogance and brutality mark their entry into a small Eskimo settlement where they murder innocent people to effect an escape by plane to the interior. In the wheat district near Winnepeg they come upon a community of Hutterite Germans, and it is here that *Peter* (Anton Walbrook), the religious leader, brings into bold relief the difference between Nazi and Christian ideals, ending the discussion with, "We are *not* your brothers." Little by little dissension, forces of nature, and false moves resulting in capture, cut down their number until only one remains.

Oddly enough, the well known members of the cast are each alloted only one episode These are vivid and well done, although to some, Leslie Howard may appear a shade too debonair and whimsical. The men who take the parts of Nazis give realistic portrayals as do many minor characters. Glynis Johns is an unusually appealing young girl. The picture filmed for the most part in Canada, gives interesting and often beautiful views of that far-flung country. It is stirring and really inspiring entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes, has many sound ideas

Children, 8 to 12 Too sombre in parts

❖

JOAN OF PARIS ◇ ◇

Michele Morgan, Paul Henried, Thomas Mitchell, Laird Cregar, May Robson, Alexander Granach, Alan Ladd, Jack Briggs, James Monks, Richard Fraser, Paul Weigel, John Abbott, Robert Mitchell Boys' Choir. Screen play by Charles Bennett, Ellis St. Joseph. From a story by Jacques Thery and Georges Kessel. Photography by Russell Metty. Music by Roy Webb. Direction by Robert Steverson. Produced by David Hempstead. R. K. O.

This is a World War story telling of the escape to England of a group of R.A.F. fliers whose ship has made a forced landing near Paris. The men, led by their squadron leader, a Free Frenchman, make their way to the city to get help from a priest who is quietly but efficiently assisting the Allied cause. In Paris the grim, persistent arm of the Gestapo envelopes them, and the plot becomes a battle of wits rather than of physical cruelty. The excellent script and smooth direction make the film a thrilling one with sustained suspense.

The picture introduces two newcomers to the American screen, Michele Morgan and Paul Henried (known for his work in "Night Train"). They are both fine. Added to these personable and expert stars is Laird Cregar who, in the role of Gestapo Chief, again gives a splendid performance with a touch of dandified saddism which repels and terrifies; Thomas Mitchell as the parish priest makes the character richly human, dignified and sympathetic. May Robson and an excellent cast give able support. The production ranks high technically. Photography, music and decor are integrated to add to the effect of realism, and the picture is an intense portrayal of exciting adventure rather than an exposition of Nazi brutality.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 A matter of taste and emotional stability

Children, 8 to 12 Not recommended

❖

THE LADY HAS PLANS ◇ ◇

Ray Milland, Paulette Goddard, Roland Young, Albert Dekker, Margaret Hayes, Cecil Kellaway, Addison Richards, Edward Norris, Charles Arnt. Based on a story by Leo Birinski. Screen play by Harry Tugend. Direction by Sidney Lanfield. Paramount.

When *Sidney Royce*, a pretty young newspaper woman, is sent to Lisbon on an assignment, she is mistaken for a Nazi spy and becomes the object of unwelcome attention from German, American and English officials. At first everyone but *Sidney* knows that the real spy has a map on her back, and *Sidney*, not unjustifiably begins to think that the men who

pursue her have designs on her person. The film starts off as a spicy, sophisticated farce and ends up as a melodrama as fantastic as any episode in "The Green Hornet." The entertaining beginning and the excellent cast give the picture enough momentum to carry it through the absurdities of its closing sequences. Played by less expert comedians some of the scenes might not have escaped the censors.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE LADY IS WILLING ◇ ◇

Marlene Dietrich, Fred MacMurray, Aline MacMahon, Stanley Ridges, Arline Judge, Roger Clark, Marietta Canty, David James, Ruth Ford, Sterling Holloway, Harvey Stephens, Harry Shannon, Elizabeth Risdon, Charles Lane, Murray Alper, Kitty Kelley. Screen play by James Edward Grant and Albert McCleery, from a story by James Grant. Direction by Mitchell Leisen. Produced by Charles K. Feldman. Columbia Pictures.

While no one can doubt that this is broad farce, its effect is greatly weakened by the introduction of so much sentimentality that even Mitchell Leisen is hampered in his direction. Occasionally his deft touch makes the scenes very funny, but the combination of burlesque with straight roles, and fantastic with plausible situations, leaves the audience confused as to the real intentions of the script writers. Not a few dull moments impede the fun.

The plot tells of a tempermental and sentimental actress who kidnaps an abandoned baby. Against the frantic protests of her secretary and her manager, she eludes the police until a "phony" lawyer and trumped up parents blackmail her. She then manages a marriage of convenience with a baby specialist in order to keep the child, and although the doctor's former wife creates a scene or two they eventually fall into each other's arms.

Surrounded by luxurious sets Miss Dietrich is exquisitely gowned, and she plays with more animation and charm than usual. Aline MacMahon gives a finished performance as the harrassed secretary, and a negro maid and Stanley Ridges, the manager, also seem normal amid the confusion. Baby David James steals honors by keeping his charming serenity in spite of the man-handling he endures and proves that he is a real trouper under difficult conditions. The film joins other marital farces offered today which amuse but fall short of complete success.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 No interest

MR. BUG GOES TO TOWN ◇ ◇

Music and lyrics by Hoagy Carmichael, Frank Loossor and Sammy Timberg. Photography by Charles Schettler. Direction by Dave Fleisher. Produced by Max Fleisher-Paramount.

It is possible that this eighty minute color cartoon could be divided into two or three perfectly delightful shorts; in the present form it needs drastic cutting to maintain interest. The film lacks the matchless rhythm and the emphasis on certain characters and events which put the Disney features in a class by themselves. The central idea is a clever one: the concept of a colony of bugs who live in the garden of a deserted house in the skyscraper district of a great city and who are menaced by all the activities of the *Human Ones,* from their clumsy feet to their gigantic automobiles in traffic, and their machinery used in constructing a huge office building. In the end the bugs find security in a pent house above the roar of the city. Love, jealousy, kindness and revenge have a place in their lives as in those of people, but the same plot devices are repeated time and again, such as *Mr. Beetle's* nefarious attempts to gain *Miss Honey Bee* for his bride and the struggles of the insects to scale girder after girder in their ascent of the towering building.

The color work is beautiful and the cartooning is often fascinating. The *Human Ones* are suggested only by their legs and hands; the bug village is a gem of imagination; and delicate drawing and many of the characters have an amazing amount of personality. There are the likeable hero, *Hoppity* the grasshopper; the long-lashed, oversweet *Miss Bee;* the born pessimist *Mr. Snail;* maternal *Mrs. Ladybug;* and best of all *Mr. Beetle,* a Dickensesque villain, and his two priceless trouble-maker friends, the *Mosquito* and the *Fly.* Some of the songs are very catchy, and the music as a whole is appropriate, although in one sequence it seems overpowering as an accompaniment for the migration of the insect multitude.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Good, if not too long to bore them

❖

"MISTER V" ◇ ◇

Leslie Howard, Mary Morris, Francis Sullivan, Hugh McDermott, Raymond Huntley, A. E. Mathews, Roland Pertwee, Manning Wiley, Philip Friend, Basil Appleby, Peter Gawthorne, Ben Williams. Screen play by Anatole De Grunwald, based on original story by Anatole De Grunwald and Roland Pertwee. Produced and directed by Leslie Howard. Released through United Artists.

With the forewarning that "Mr. V" is fantasy, the authors prepare the audience to judge the film as a vehicle for the presentation of an abstract idea rather than as a realistic drama. It may be enjoyed, however,

from both view points for it actually does tell an entertaining story of adventure without many more improbabilities than are found in most stories of foreign agents who outwit the Gestapo.

Illustrating the premise that the mind of man is universal and will ultimately triumph over brute force, the film recounts the amazing feats of an English archæology professor who, while apparently the most gentle and impractical of men, enters Germany in 1938, and from under the very eyes of Nazi officials spirits away intellectual leaders who have been doomed to death in concentration camps. Leslie Howard gives a delightful interpretation of the role of *Professor Horatio Smith,* and he uses the trick of hiding under the cloak of an assumed personality as amusingly as in the Scarlet Pimpernel. Because there have been so many recent films in the Nazi setting, this one derives its novelty from its different treatment. It is occasionally intensely exciting, although it never employs horror or brutality for thrills, and it frequently sparkles with delicious satire in the characterizations of pompous, Sybaritic Nazi officials. Moreover, although it is a film with an undisguised purpose, it is so well conceived, acted, and directed that it is excellent entertainment as well as a timely stimulus to the foes of oppression.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Mature and little interest

❖

NO HANDS ON THE CLOCK ◇ ◇

Chester Morris, Jean Parker, Rose Hobart, Dick Purcell, Astrid Allwyn, Rod Cameron, James Kirkwood, Keye Luke, Billie Seward, Loren Raker. Screen play by Maxwell Shane, based on novel by Geoffrey Homes. Direction by Frank McDonald. Produced by William H. Pine and William Thomas. Paramount.

This is a comedy-mystery in which a private detective and his wife interrupt their honeymoon to start a search for a missing person and find the case complicated by several murders before the solution is reached. Unfortunately too many characters are introduced and too many references made to irrelevant incidents to keep interest at a high pitch. However, humorous bits of characterization lighten the picture and the title intrigues. It refers to a clock without hands on a mortuary and doubtless signifies that "Death Is Timeless."

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value

Children, 8 to 12 No

ON THE SUNNY SIDE ◇ ◇

Roddy McDowall, Jane Darwell, Stanley Clements, Katharine Alexander, Don Douglas, Freddie Mercer, Ann Todd, Jill Esmond, Freddie Walburn, Leon Tyler, Billy Benedict, Stuart Robertson. Suggested by story "Fraternity" by Mary C. McCall, Jr. Direction by Harold Schuster. Twentieth Century-Fox.

This is a pleasantly entertaining story of child life. *Hugh Aylesworth,* an English boy, comes to America to stay with family friends "for the duration." *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews,* who have a son, *Don,* about the same age, do everything in their power to make *Hugh* happy and at home. The unavoidable publicity and special consideration given to *Hugh* create a situation which causes unhappiness to *Don,* and it requires tact and understanding to adjust both boys.

The picture is slowly paced at times but it is always interesting. The *Andrewses* are a typical and delightful American family who have a dog that would thrill any child and a maid who is a real asset to the family. Roddy McDowall and Freddie Mercer are both excellent, and the cast is well chosen and gives able support. The picture should have wide appeal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good, entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

THE REMARKABLE ANDREW ◇ ◇

Brian Donlevy, William Holden, Ellen Drew, Montagu Love, Gilbert Emery, Brandon Hurst, George Watts, Rod Cameron, Jimmy Conlin, Richard Webb, Spencer Charters, Minor Watson, Clyde Fillmore, Thomas W. Ross, Porter Hall, Wallis Clark, Milton Parsons. Novel and screen play by Dalton Trumbo. Direction by Stuart Heisler. Produced by Richard Blumenthal. Paramount.

In tune with the motion picture industry's effort to help in furthering national appreciation of democratic ideals, Paramount gives us "The Remarkable Andrew." This film, however, is not only good propaganda, it is good entertainment and should be thought of in terms of fun and relaxation. The plot is unusual. *Andrew Long,* a conscientious, plodding young American, audits the books of a prosperous little town and hopes by hard work and honesty to win a promotion which will enable him to marry his fiancee. When he happens upon evidence pointing to the dishonesty of certain town politicians, he loses his job and is imprisoned pending trial on trumped up charges of embezzlement. But *Andrew* is fortunate, because all his life he has studied the lives of great Americans, and in his hour of need these national heroes come to his rescue. Headed by General Andrew Jackson who arrives first alone, they appear to him as spirits invisible to all but him, and by their combined wisdom and ingenunity enable him to clear himself of charges and rout the crooked politicians. These kindly spooks are delightfully and hu-

merously characterized (though the General is much too fond of the bottle), and the strange happenings which take place afford many laughs. The plot will not bear too critical analysis, but the picture as a whole is much above the average. The cast is good. William Holden and Ellen Drew are especially pleasing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Entertaining if not too hard to follow

❖

ROXIE HART ◇ ◇

Ginger Rogers, Adoph Menjou, George Montgomery, Lynne Overman, Nigel Bruce, Phil Silvers, Sara Allgood, William Frawley, Spring Byington, Ted North, Helene Reynolds, George Lessley, Iris Adrian, Milton Parsons. Screen play by Nunnally Johnson, based on stage play "Chicago" written by Maurine Watkins and produced by Sam H. Harris. Directed by William A. Wellman. Twentieth Century-Fox.

"Roxie Hart," the ironical satire produced on the stage, appears in movie form as broad burlesque. The notorious release from the Cook County, Chicago, courts of every woman accused of murder, and the attending sentimental publicity build-up, intrigue a woman to assume her husband's guilt in the murder of a man she has known. The plot is a travesty of legal procedure and the people concerned are caricatures. Greater subtlety would have made the story a bitter satire. Miss Rogers gives a varied and excellent performance. The picture requires adult interpretation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Gives harmful impression of law courts

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

SONG OF THE ISLANDS ◇ ◇

Betty Grable, Victor Mature, Jack Oakie, Thomas Mitchell, George Barbier, Billy Gilbert, Hilo Hattie, Lillian Porter, Hal K. Dawson. Direction by Walter Lang. Musical direction by Alfred Newman. 20th Century-Fox.

In a luxuriant tropical setting, beautifully photographed in brilliant Technicolor, "Song of the Islands" makes one sigh for the days when a pleasure voyage to the South Pacific was a dream not impossible of realization. Its unusual pictorial beauty and generous use of ever popular Hawaiian songs and dances will appeal to many audiences. Less appealing by contrast but probably good for the box office is the rather ordinary, musical comedy plot with Betty Grable and Victor Mature as romantic leads and Hilo Hattie and Jack Oakie as poi slinging comedians. The finale, a song and dance ensemble set to a fascinating medley of Irish jig and Hula music, is better suited to Betty Grable's style than are the flowing native dances of earlier sequences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless

SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS ◇ ◇

Joel McCrea, Veronica Lake, Robert Warwick, William Demarest, Franklin Pangborn, Porter Hall, Byron Foulger, Margaret Hayes, Robert Greig, Eric Blore, Torben Meyer, Victor Potel, Richard Webb, Charles More. Story, adaptation and direction by Preston Sturges. Paramount.

Mr. Sturges contends that the world needs laughter and that comedians offer a healthful service to mankind. He has attempted to prove this in a mocking picture of Hollywood, taking as his hero *John Sullivan,* a movie director, who has successfully entertained millions with light, amusing inanities. *Sullivan* wants to make a film with social significance but his producers attempt to dissuade him on the grounds that his easy sheltered life has unfitted him to understand the misery he plans to picture. To learn this at first hand, he leaves his palatial home in tramp clothes, borrowed from the studio wardrobe, with only a dime in his pocket. Time and again, he finds himself frustrated until at last he gets into real trouble and escapes with difficulty from a Southern chain gang camp.

The film is a clever travesty on Hollywood and a bitter one on poverty and misery. It would have kept this mood more happily had it ended when Sullivan hands out five dollar bills to all and sundry derelicts. But the story continues into actual degradation and hopelessness, which offsets the wit and fantasy and leaves a sordid memory of a phase of life of which Americans are not proud.

The photography, the unusally clever sound effects, the script and the direction, which inspires the best efforts from a distinguished cast, call for admiration and illustrate again Mr. Sturges' artistic ability. One carries away unforgettable impressions of the studio executives, the solemn and windy butler, the panicky valet, the thief on the railroad track, and the jittery little shell of a man who acts as buffer between the chain gang prisoners and their "Mister." Mr. Sturges has a worthwhile point to make in stressing the necessity of laughter in a screwball world, but whether his treatment of the subject will appeal to everyone is a moot question.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too mature for many

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

WE WERE DANCING ◇ ◇

Norma Shearer, Melvyn Douglas, Gail Patrick, Lee Bowman, Marjorie Main, Reginald Owen, Alan Mowbray, Florence Bates, Heather Thatcher, Connie Gilchrist, Nella Walker, Russell Hicks, Norma Varden. Screen play by Claudine West, Hans Rameau and George Froschel, based in part on "Tonight at 8:30" by Noel Coward. Direction by Robert Z. Leonard. M-G-M.

Noel Coward's one act plays with their light and cynical sophistication require no happy ending and profit by being only thumbnail sketches of a phase of life. In

"We Were Dancing" two young professional society spongers are carried through an elopement, a tempestuous marriage, divorce and remarriage. The film is a light, trivial farce with a tawdry theme, and the ending is a concession to conventional demands which could be found only in a movie. Miss Shearer and Melvyn Douglas are attractive in roles which less assured actors would find difficult to make sympathetic at all. The film would have been benefitted by more Noel Coward or less footage.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

WILD BILL HICKOK RIDES ◇ ◇

Constance Bennett, Bruce Cabot, Warren William, Walter Catlett, Ward Bond, Howard da Silva, Frank Wilcox, Faye Emerson, Julie Bishop, Lucia Carroll, Russell Simpson. Music by Howard Jackson. Direction by Ray Enright. Warner Bros.

In spite of an imposing cast and the prodigal use of extras, cattle, costumes, sets, and all the trappings, this remains a run of the mill Western. The story follows a time-honored formula and employs all the sure-fire, but well-known, thrill producers: a train robbery, a runaway team of horses, galloping herds, frequent and loud gun battles, a dynamited dam with its resultant flood. The picture lacks the very fine mountain scenery which marks many Westerns. While the cast as a whole is satisfactory, probably the one who gives the most original performance is Betty Brower, an independent, out-spoken youngster at the awkward age.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 No. Too much of the seamy side of life

A YANK ON THE BURMA ROAD ◇ ◇

Barry Nelson, Laraine Day, Stuart Crawford, Keye Luke, Sen Yung, Phillip Ahn, Knox Manning, Matthew Boulton, James Leong, Mrs. Poo Sai. Original screen play by Gordon Kahn, Hugo Butler and David Lang. Directed by George B. Seitz. Produced by Samuel Marx. M-G-M.

This story of convoying American Hospital supplies over the Burma Road, is interesting only because of the Chinese characters it introduces and the realistic impression it gives of the road and its dangers. The personal story is weak. *Joe Tracey* (Barry Nelson) is a tough New York taxi driver who ingeniously captures some desperate criminals. Due to the resulting publicity a Chinese Society asks him to take charge of a convoy of trucks over the Road. In Rangoon a pretty woman joins the caravan, and both she and *Joe Tracey* allow personal objectives and sentimentality to cloud the greater issue of the obligation to the Chinese.

Barry Nelson has an unusual personality which may be used effectively after he has had more experience. Laraine Day is negligible. *Mrs. Poo Sai,* as an old Chinese refugee does a beautiful bit which symbolizes the terrible tragedy of Chinese civilian sufferers. While the topic has current interest, the picture is not outstanding, and recent war developments make it seem out of date.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sophisticated but background interesting

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting

★ ★ ★

SHORT SUBJECTS

THE CALIFORNIA JUNIOR SYMPHONY ◇

Direction by Jean Negulesco. Musical conductor, Peter Meremblum. Warner Bros.

Of especial interest to parents and music teachers is this demonstration of the work accomplished by a talented group of children under the able direction of Peter Meremblum. Their performance of familiar classical numbers is praiseworthy, although the film could be improved by judicious cutting. Good for all ages.

❖

THE GREENIE ◇ ◇

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer "Miniature" series.

A tough gang of East Side New York boys make a place in their sand lot baseball team for a young Polish immigrant who eagerly desires to become a part of the American way of life. The boy who plays "The Greenie" is a fine, sensitive actor, and the others are realistic. The feeling of fair play is excellent. All ages.

❖

THE NEW SPIRIT ◇ ◇

Donald Duck cartoon. Walt Disney.

Since we must pay taxes, why not accept them with laughter and a bit of fun? Today the income tax reaches millions who were exempt before, and Walt Disney, at the request of the U. S. Treasury, has put Donald Duck on the spot in this delightfully clever seven-minute short. Admonished by a voice from the radio to help protect his country, Donald responds, armed to the teeth and

with flags literally waving in his eyes. When the announcer goes on to say that his money is wanted, not his life, Donald is crushed, but as he learns what his money will buy in safety for his country, he can scarcely wait to reach Washington with his cash.

If the method of filling out the income tax blank were more clearly elucidated, the film would have more practical value. However, color, humor, and a catchy tune enlighten the public on a patriotic obligation and leaven necessity with laughter. Entertaining for all ages; significant for elders.

WE DO IT BECAUSE ◇ ◇

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer "Passing Parade" series.

Explanations of the reasons why we perform certain social customs such as shaking hands, tipping hats, touching glasses when drinking, even kissing, are given in a fairly interesting short. Treated in a humorous vein, some of the examples are so far-fetched that one is skeptical of their authenticity, and the effect is amusing rather than instructive All ages.

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APRIL
1942

FEATURE FILMS

—o—

Always In My Heart
The Bashful Bachelor
Black Dragons
Butch Minds The Baby
The Courtship of Andy Hardy
The Fleet's In
Fly By Night
Frisco Lil
Gentlemen After Dark
The Ghost of Frankenstein
The Gold Rush
The Jungle Book
Kid Glove Killer
Kings Row
Klondike Fury
The Male Animal
Mexican Spitfire At Sea
Mokey
Nazi Agent
Reap The Wild Wind
The Remarkable Mr. Kipps
Ride 'Em, Cowboy
Rings On Her Fingers
Scattergood Rides High
Secret Agent of Japan
This Time For Keeps
To Be or Not To Be
To The Shores of Tripoli
The Tuttles of Tahiti
Two Yanks In Trinidad
What's Cookin'
Who Is Hope Schuyler?

SHORT SUBJECTS

What About Daddy?
March of Time
(The Argentine Question)

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FEATURE FILMS

ALWAYS IN MY HEART ◇ ◇

Kay Francis, Walter Huston, Gloria Warren, Patty Hale, Frankie Thomas, Una O'Connor, Sidney Blackmer, Armida, Frank Puglia. Original screen play by Adele Comandini. Suggested by a play by Dorothy Bennett and Irving White. Music by H. Roemheld. Title song by Ernesto Lecuona. Direction by Jo Graham. Warner Bros.

Built on a heavily sentimental theme, this picture does scant justice to the talents of Walter Huston and Kay Francis. *MacKenzie Scott,* a musician, imprisoned falsely for many years, learns on the eve of his parole that his former wife is about to marry a man who can give her the luxuries, and his two adolescent children the opportunities, he believes they should have. In a spirit of self-abnegation he remains silent about his release, but a yearning for his family draws him to their home on the coast near Monterey, and he gradually becomes a guiding spirit in their lives. Since *Scott* is a pianist and conductor of no mean ability, and his daughter *Vicky* gives promise of becoming an opera star, it is natural that the picture should contain many vocal and orchestral numbers, and some of the most pleasing scenes occur when he plays her accompaniments. Gloria Warren has a beautiful, clear soprano voice. Walter Huston gives one of his excellent characterizations, and Kay Francis is gracious and lovely in her part. However, there are some disagreeable elements in the film which would seem to be flaws in direction rather than the fault of the actors. The son and daughter are inexcusably bad mannered at times, and the housekeeper's small grandchild, *Booley,* is so insufferable that any normal woman would love to take her across a knee. The leering faces of men in the cannery band are not pleasant to remember.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Only passable

Children, 8 to 12
No. Bad example of child in film. Also gives feeling of insecurity.

❖

THE BASHFUL BACHELOR ◇ ◇

Chester Lauck, Norris Goff, Zasu Pitts, Grady Sutton, Oscar O'Shea, Louise Currie, Constance Purdy, Irving Bacon, Earle Hodgins, Benny Rubin. Screen play by Chandler Sprague. From an original by Chester Lauck and Norris Goff. Direction by Malcolm St. Clair. R.K.O.

Followers of Lum and Abner on the radio will enjoy this homey little story of the two amiable and gullible old chaps whose life revolves around their country store. Lum gets into romantic difficulties but is saved by the reappearance of the "widder's" husband.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12
Matter of taste

BLACK DRAGONS ◇ ◇

Bela Lugosi, Joan Barklay, George Pembroke, Clayton Moore, Bob Frazer, Max Hoffman, Jr., Irving Mitchell, Ed Peil, Sr., Bob Fiske, Kenneth Harlan, J. Stanford Jolley. Original story and screen play by Harvey Gates. Direction by William Nigh. Monogram Pictures.

Possibly the fact that the Black Dragon Secret Society of Japan has hit the headlines recently makes this incredible plot somewhat more acceptable than it otherwise would have been. We are becoming conditioned to believe almost anything about Axis agents. We are first introduced to ordinary American business men who, we discover, are conniving to hamper National Defense efforts. Next a mysterious and frightening stranger appears on the scene and one by one the business men are murdered. Only at the end do we learn that this stranger is a Nazi agent who, as a skilful plastic surgeon, disguised the natural physical characteristics of Japanese Fifth Columnists and thus enabled them to come to the States and pass as Americans without arousing suspicion. The German was imprisoned after the operations and had escaped to get his revenge. The film is a horror thriller, handicapped by hasty production.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

BUTCH MINDS THE BABY ◇ ◇

Virginia Bruce, Brod Crawford, Dick Foran, Shemp Howard, Porter Hall, Richard Lane, Rosina Galli, Joe King, Fuzzy Knight, Grant Withers, Russell Hicks and Baby Michael Terrence O'Neill. Screen play by Leonard Spigelgass from story by Damon Runyon. Direction by Albert S. Rogell. Mayfair Production. Universal Pictures.

An engaging baby and Damon Runyon's facile ability to make his preposterous characters comically human furnish diverting qualities to this picture. A paroled safebreaker is given a job as janitor, to his acute embarrassment. A young, discouraged widow with an adorable baby brings out all the chivalry in his nature until in his eagerness to insure security for the two, *Butch* is willing to violate his parole, run the risk of life imprisonment, and further the romance between the lady and a policeman. The obvious motivation of his acts promises leniency from the court.

The action is designed for comedy, and there are many hearty laughs throughout. Brod Crawford plays the role of *Butch* with just the right mixture of sentimentality and shrewd common sense to make it very funny and sympathetic as well. Shemp Howard is amusing, too. Dick Foran as the police officer learns that the letter of the law may be tempered with understanding and comes out a hero worthy of the lovely lady. The baby is a star, and the tenement with its assorted types, not to mention a baby goat who deserves credit, furnishes an entertaining setting. It is an unpretentious film which offers an hour of relaxation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing

Children, 8 to 12 To light to be taken seriously

❖

THE COURTSHIP OF ANDY HARDY ◇ ◇

Lewis Stone, Mickey Rooney, Cecilia Parker, Fay Holden, Ann Rutherford, Sara Haden, Donna Reed, William Lundigan, Steve Cornell, Frieda Inescort, Betty Wells, Joseph Crehan, George Breakston, Todd Karns. Screen play by Agnes Christine Johnston based on characters created by Aurania Rouverol. Direction by George B. Seitz. M.G.M.

This picture gives less importance to *Andy* than the title indicates, for it is more a chronicle of the whole family than of *Andy's* love affairs. Actually *Andy* is only being nice to a lonely girl whose parents are having marital difficulties, and while *Melodie* misunderstands his gallantry and thinks herself in love with him, it is all adjusted happily. There are amusing scenes concerning *Mrs. Hardy's* inability to balance her check book, the family's effort to awaken *Marion* to what is suitable in the matter of clothes (*Marion* having returned from New York with an adolescent interpretation of sophistication), and *Andy's* bright ideas of how to get the boys to relieve him of his wallflower partner at the dance. *Judge Hardy's* wise advice about drinking is very effective. The film is human and entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Probably enjoyable

❖

THE FLEET'S IN ◇ ◇

Dorothy Lamour, William Holden, Eddie Bracken, Betty Hutton, Leif Erickson, Betty Jane Rhodes, Barbara Britten, Cass Daley, Gil Lamb, Jack Norton, Roy Atwell, Robert Warwick. Direction by Victor Schertzinger. Musical direction by Victor Young. Paramount.

Taken from the stage production, "Sailor, Beware," the picture is noisy, rollicking fun. A young and unromantic sailor is forced into the role of ardent lover when his shipmates bet on his ability to obtain a kiss in public from a reputedly unapproachable singer in a night club. William Holden's acting is smooth and natural, and Dorothy Lamour in a less exotic role than usual is very effective. A number of specialty acts come into the spotlight: numbers by Jimmy Dorsey's orchestra, eccentric dances, harmonica solos, catchy songs. There is nothing subtle about the show, but it is lively and funny, just the sort of thing the boys will like when they are off duty.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Too much love making

FLY BY NIGHT ◇ ◇

Nancy Kelly, Richard Carlson, Albert Basserman, Miles Mander, Walter Kingsford, Martin Kosleck, Marion Martin, Mary Gordon, Edward Gargan. Direction by Robert Siodmak. Paramount.

Eliza crossing the ice pursued by bloodhounds has nothing on *Jeff Burton,* the hero of this film, for hair-raising excitement. Through no fault of his own he is hunted down by police for a murder he has not committed and threatened by as venomous a batch of Nazi agents as can be imagined. His impedimentum consists not of a babe but of a personable young artist who alone has an accurate description of him, and their altercations supply the lighter touch and the spice of comedy. On the theory that all is fair in love and war, *Jeff* blithely compounds felonies, shows up the police force as utter blockheads, and indulges in some quite indelicate comments so that all in all a bad example is set for youth. The acting is much too good for the script.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

FRISCO LIL ◇ ◇

Irene Hervey, Kent Taylor, Jerome Cowan, Minor Watson, Samuel S. Hinds, Matty Fain, Claire Whitney. Direction by Erle Kenton. Universal.

Jeff Grey (Minor Watson) is a professional gambler, but one who plays straight with his games of chance. When he refuses to change his policy in his gambling house to conform to his partner's desires, he is framed on a murder charge. *Jeff* has insisted that his daughter (Irene Hervey) be brought up apart from him in order to prevent her having any connection with his profession. She has studied law, and when the father she adores is implicated in the crime, she refuses to stay in the background, goes into the establishment as a dealer, and proves his innocence. The story emphasizes the devotion between child and parent, but the sordid setting precludes full enjoyment. Good acting and adequate direction give it some interest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Wrong values emphasized **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

GENTLEMAN AFTER DARK ◇ ◇

Brian Donlevy, Miriam Hopkins, Preston Foster, Harold Huber, Philip Reed, Gloria Holden, Douglas Dumbrille, Sharon Douglas, Bi Henry. Screen play by Patterson McNutt and George Bruce based on story, "A Whiff of Heliotrope," by Richard Washburn Child. Direction by Edwin Marin. Edward Small Production. United Artists.

In spite of a plot which does not bear close scrutiny for originality, this film, a mixture of grimness and comedy, is entertaining. *Heliotrope Harry,* a gentleman *Raffles,* is a crook who becomes a murderer when his plan to go straight for his baby's sake is threatened by his unscrupulous wife and by his partner in crime. After years in prison, he breaks out to protect his daughter's good name.

Brian Donlevy, by his subdued performance, creates sympathy in the character and the director has maintained a mood of pathos and suspense lightened by broad humor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** Unsuitable

❖

THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN ◇ ◇

Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Ralph Bellamy, Lionel Atwill, Bela Lugosi, Eveyn Ankers, Janet Ann Gallow, Barton Yarborough, Doris Lloyd, Leyland Hodgson, Olaf Hytten, Holmes Herbert, Lon Chaney. Screen play by W. Scott Darling from an original story by Eric Taylor. Direction by Erle C. Kenton. Universal Pictures.

The Frankenstein monster was once burned in sulphur and buried—we hoped—forever. But apparently it takes more than that to settle the horrid robot. At any rate, his ghost returns to frighten successive audiences.

At the time this story opens, the townspeople have decided to dynamite the Frankenstein Castle because of the continuous terror it inspires. The explosion opens the sulphur pit where the monster was supposedly done for. The creature is miraculously found alive, and from then on one outrage after another is committed until again a fire puts an end to it all. We can not hope, however, that the creature's demise is final so long as the public seems to thrive on his reappearance.

The cast is excellent, and photography and direction help to sustain an eerie, supernatural quality consistent with the material. How much screen monsters actually terrify, however, is debatable, as so much horrifying realism is available on the printed page and on the screen today that a picture such as this is more easily recognized as a fable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** Unsuitable

❖

THE GOLD RUSH ◇ ◇

Charlie Chaplin, Mack Swain, Tom Murray, Henry Bergman, Georgia Hale, Malcolm Waite. Written and directed by Charlie Chaplin. Narration written and spoken by Charlie Chaplin. Music by Charlie Chaplin and musical direction by Max Terr. United Artists.

This is a reissue of the silent film so popular twenty years ago. Narrated dialogue has been added and its sparse use demonstrates how little is required with real pantomime. The musical score also further interprets and complements the action. The story is of a lone prospector in Alaska, and it is still as funny as we remember it, hilarious but ten-

der and pathetic as well. Although many of the gags have been copied since, they seem as fresh as ever, possibly because no other comedian has Chaplin's perfect skill in timing. Children and adults will love this classic of the little man who brings us close to tears through our laughter.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Excellent

❖

THE JUNGLE BOOK ◇ ◇

Sabu, Joseph Calleia, John Qualen, Frank Puglia, Rosemary De Camp, Patricia O'Rourke, Ralph Byrd, John Mather, Faith Brook, Noble Johnson. Screen play and dialogue by Laurence Stallings. Based on the story by Rudyard Kipling. Direction by Zoltan Korda. Produced by Alexander Korda. Music by Miklos Rozsa. Photographed in Technicolor. United Artists Release.

No picturization of a book as well loved as Kipling's "Jungle Book" could completely satisfy all audiences, but Alexander Korda is to be congratulated for reproducing a great deal of the magic of the original story. The loveliness of the jungle scenery and the remarkable photography of *Mowgli's* wild animal friends are unforgettable, and the legend of the Wolf Boy as it is unfolded on the screen is made to seem amazingly believable. The plot is enlarged from the book to include more human characters than were in the original stories, but these are so Kiplingesque that one does not resent their presence. Sabu, of course, is particularly suited to the role of *Mowgli* and plays it most engagingly. Although there is some difference of opinion about the handling of one or two scenes, surely no one should fail to see in the picture a rich mine of imaginative entertainment. The musical score is a delight.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Familiarity with the book would increase enjoyment

❖

KID GLOVE KILLER ◇ ◇

Van Heflin, Marsha Hunt, Lee Bowman, Samuel S. Hinds, Cliff Edwards, Eddie Quillan, John Litel, Catherine Lewis, Nella Walker. Screen play by Allen Rivkin and John C. Higgens from an original story by John C. Higgens. Direction by Fred Zinnemann. Produced by Jack Chertok. M.G.M.

This is no "whodunit" mystery, for almost at the outset we learn who the villain is and what he is doing. The problem then is how the police will discover his identity and get the necessary evidence to convict him. It is exciting, too, for the villain is a smooth one and knows all the answers all too well. The scientific laboratory procedure in crime detection is illustrated in an interesting way, and a pleasant romance lightens the action.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Constructive

Children, 8 to 12 Builds for respect of police force

KINGS ROW ◇ ◇

Ann Sheridan, Robert Cummings, Ronald Reagan, Betty Field, Charles Coburn, Claude Rains, Judith Anderson, Nancy Coleman, Kaaren Verne, Maria Ouspenskaya, Harry Davenport, Ernest Cossart, Ilka Gruning, Pat Moriarity, Sam Winters, Ludwig Stossel, Erwin Kalser, Egon Brecher, Ann Todd, Douglas Croft and Scotty Beckett in child roles. Screen play by Casey Robinson from novel by Henry Bellaman. Music by Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Direction by Sam Wood. Warner Bros.

In "Kings Row" we have an example of a superb screen adaptation of a powerful and sombre novel. The main theme has been clarified by eliminating distracting incidents which, for many, made the book unpalatable reading. It tells the story of a sensitive young man, brought up under the guidance of his grandmother, a cultured and exceptional woman. Even in childhood he recognizes, without understanding, the influence of evil which colors the social life of the small town in which he lives. Later, as a medical graduate, he uses his specific training in psychiatry to disentangle the tragic web of soul sickness which wrecks the lives of his closest friends. It requires sacrifice for him, and the experience convinces him that sometimes it is necessary to violate good to overcome evil. The story gives the town an overpreponderance of tragedy, of family skeletons, Sadism, insanity—until there seems to be no normal family within its limits. While this gives the psychiatrist the opportunity for his healing, it is almost too exaggerated. One feels, however, that the doctor's sacrific was worth its cost, that happiness will come to him and contentment to his friends.

The cast does some fine acting, notably Betty Field, Ann Sheridan, Ronald Reagan, Nancy Coleman, Claude Rains. The director, Sam Wood, has handled the psychological drama by allowing no extraneous details to detract from the whole. Photography also is worthy of special mention, and the musical score is very beautiful. The children who take the parts of the principals in the early scenes are very natural and capable. It is one of the exceptional films of the year and one which adults should find most interesting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

KLONDIKE FURY ◇ ◇

Edmund Lowe, Lucille Fairbanks, Bill Henry, Ralph Morgan, Robert Middlemass, Jean Brooks, Mary Forbes, Vince Barnett, Clyde Cook, Marjorie Wood, Kenneth Harlan. Screen play by Henry Blankfort from the story, "Klondike," by Tristram Tupper. Direction by William K. Howard. Produced by Maurice King. Monogram.

A celebrated surgeon whose name has been smirched with scandal because of the failure of an experimental operation, finds

an opportunity to redeem himself when an almost identical case is presented to him in a remote, winter-bound settlement in Alaska. His patient is bitter, intractable young man who has developed an invalid psychosis, and who believes that he can hold the girl he loves only by inspiring pity. *Dr. Mandre* cures him both mentally and physically.

Made on a small budget, this film proves that a satisfactory production can be made without great outlay if it has an interesting story, a proficient director, and a group of actors who enter fully into their parts. Edmund Lowe gives a forceful portrayal of the surgeon, Ralph Morgan is colorful as a back country doctor, and Bill Henry competently fills the difficult role of the invalid whose mind and body have been warped by his affliction.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes. Good example of overcoming difficulties

Children, 8 to 12 Mature

❖

THE MALE ANIMAL ◇ ◇

Henry Fonda, Olivia de Haviland, Joan Leslie, Jack Carson, Eugene Pallette, Herbert Anderson, Hattie McDaniel, Ivan Simpson, Don DeFore, Jean Ames, Minna Phillips, Regina Wallace, Frank Mayo, William B. Davidson, Bobby Barnes. Screen play by Julius J. and Philip Morehouse Avery from the play by James Thurber and Elliott Nugent. Direction by Elliott Nugent. Warner Bros.

"The Male Animal" is sophisticated comedy dealing with the old problem of brain vs. brawn. But it also has many other irons in the fire. It satirizes the part played by football in the college curriculum; it ridicules the sophomoric behavior of old grads who return to the scene of their erstwhile triumphs, and for good measure, it also puts in a serious word for academic freedom of ideas. Its mood is frankly jumbled and yet there are many laughs throughout its course.

Henry Fonda, as *Tommy Turner*, a college professor of English, and his charming wife (Olivia de Haviland) are making unpretentious preparations for "Home Coming" before the Big Game. Into their quiet lives a bombshell drops when a hot-headed liberal student announces in the school paper that *Turner* will read in class the last letter written by Vanzetti. In spite of *Turner's* explanation that he intended to use the letter merely to illustrate a brilliant form of expression by one who was not a professional writer, a smug trustee takes up the issue. Confused and distressed, *Turner* sticks to his belief that he is right. The unhappy situation is further complicated by his wife's irritation at his stand, and by the return of one of her former suitors to the "Home Coming." When *Turner* strengthens his convictions with too much liquor, the fun lags. As a whole, however, the film is highly entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too much drinking

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MEXICAN SPITFIRE AT SEA ◇ ◇

Lupe Velez, Leon Errol, Buddy Rogers, Zasu Pitts, Elizabeth Risdon, Florence Bates, Marion Martin, Lydia Bilbrook, Eddie Dunn, Harry Holman, Marten Lamont. Direction by Leslie Goodwins. R.K.O.

The experiences of the Mexican Spitfire, *Carmelita,* and of her astonishing uncle, and her long-suffering husband, continue on a ship bound for Honolulu. *Carmelita* gets mad when she discovers that the trip is not only for pleasure but that a business contract is in the offing. She opens up her characteristic fireworks to embarrass her husband but in the end gets the contract herself and all is forgiven. Leon Errol's clever portrayal of both *Uncle Mat* and *Lord Epping* is the highlight, as usual, and if one likes slapstick, the picture comes up to expectations. The settings are good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless

❖

MOKEY ◇ ◇

Dan Dailey, Jr., Donna Reed, Bobby Blake, Cordell Hickman, William "Buckwheat" Thomas, Etta McDaniel, Marcella Moreland, George Lloyd, Matt Moore, Cleo Desmond, Cliff Clark, Mary Field, Bobby Stebbins, Sam McDaniel. Screen play by Wells Root and Jan Fortune based on stories by Jennie Harris Oliver. Direction by Wells Root. Produced by J. Walter Rubin. M.G.M.

Mokey Delano is a sensitive, imaginative, lonely, and lovable little boy who has been motherless for many years. His father, a traveling salesman, has been forced to leave him under the care of an ignorant and superstitious colored maid-of-all-work and to the limited companionship of such children as may be found in a small village. When his father suddenly brings home a bride, *Mokey* is enchanted. He confidently expects to receive the demonstrative motherly affection of which he has dreamed. The new wife is young, inexperienced, and completely baffled by the child. The story tells of the absurd, and even dangerous, predicaments in which *Mokey* becomes involved because of his inability to express himself, and his stepmother's confusion over his behavior. As a matter of fact, nothing happens that is beyond the bounds of possibility, and the picture offers a challenge to parents who give too little time to their children or who cannot penetrate their self-protective shells of inarticulateness.

Bobby Blake is a delightful little boy whose pranks draw laughter and tears. The colored children and adults are natural and

amusing, and others in the cast are adequate. Children will enjoy the comedy but will miss the deeper significance of the theme.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Probably entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Mature

❖

NAZI AGENT ◇ ◇

Reviewed in February under the title "Salute to Courage."

❖

REAP THE WILD WIND ◇ ◇

Ray Milland, John Wayne, Paulette Goddard, Raymond Massey, Robert Preston, Susan Hayward, Lynne Overman, Charles Bickford, Walter Hampden, Martha O'Driscoll, Louise Beavers, Elizabeth Risdon, Hedda Hopper, Janet Beecher, Victor Kilian. Screen play by Alan LeMay, Charles Bennett and Jesse Lasky Jr., based on Saturday Evening Post story by Thelma Strabel. Directed and produced by Cecil B. DeMille. Photographed in Technicolor. Paramount.

In "Reap The Wild Wind" Mr. DeMille has ideal material for his lavish style of production. It has an historical background of the fight to rid the Florida Keys of the disreputable piratical wreckers who preyed upon America's merchant marine along that dangerous coast line a hundred years ago. It is filmed in Technicolor, and the beautiful semi-tropical locale, the shots of violent storms on the Atlantic, a beautiful underseas sequence, and the elaborate and lovely costumes of the period made it a pictorial treat. The action is violent and swashbuckling, and the excellent cast enter into the spirit convincingly.

The story is about a Southern girl who has inherited her father's salvage business. She and her honest, efficient Captain find themselves in competition with two ruthless brothers who connive with marine officers to wreck ships. She has two admirers, and the one to whom she first gives her love proves to be a weak tool in the hands of her unscrupulous enemies. The story is logically and excitingly presented and the cast is admirable. Ray Milland gives a nicely shaded, sympathetic portrayal; John Wayne is excellent in the role of the man who turns traitor; Paulette Goddard is very good as the unconventional young woman who shocks Charlestown; and Susan Hayward is lovely and appealing as the naive girl who falls in love with one of the pirates. The story is a "natural" for the movies and follows the original with little change.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very exciting and full of action

Children, 8 to 12 Not recommended

THE REMARKABLE MR. KIPPS ◇ ◇

Philip Frost, Michael Redgrave, Diana Wynyard, Diana Calderwood, Phyllis Calvert, Arthur Riscoe, Max Adrian, Helen Haye, Michael Wilding, Lloyd Pearson, Edward Rigby, Hermione Baddeley, Mackensie Ward, Betty Ann Davies. Screen play by Sidney Gilliat from novel by H. G. Wells. Direction by Carol Reed. Produced in England. Twentieth Century-Fox.

"The Remarkable Mr. Kipps" is an adaptation of H. G. Wells' novel, "Kipps, The Story of A Simple Soul," which was written in 1905, and the film is kept in that period. A small English boy of fourteen works as an apprentice in a draper's shop. It is a hard, poorly paid, regimented life, and, as he grows older, he has a desire to "improve himself" along "cultural" lines at free classes in a settlement house. Though all he gets is wood carving, he is too timid to protest. Suddenly he inherits twenty-six thousand pounds from a grandfather he never knew. He falls into the hands of sharpers. An ambitious woman engages herself to him and sets out to educate him for society, but he accidentally meets a childhood sweetheart and realizes how unhappy he has been trying to adjust himself to a life in which he does not fit. One feels that Wells is commenting on the falsity of artificial standards and on the necessity of the "little" man's keeping to his own sphere where simple pleasures, home, and children bring real happiness. The picture probably will not have wide appeal, for it is slow-moving, has little humor, and no dramatic climax, but it is unusual and well played. The English character actors are interesting to American audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Little interest

Children, 8 to 12 Little interest

❖

RIDE 'EM, COWBOY ◇ ◇

Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Dick Foran, Anne Gwynne, Johnny Mack Brown, Ella Fitzgerald, Samuel Hinds, Douglass Dumbrille, Morris Ankum and the Merry Macs. Original story by Edmund L. Hartmann. Screen play by True Boardman and John Grant. Direction by Arthur Lubin. Universal Pictures.

An elaborate and interesting setting has been arranged as background for Abbott and Costello. There are entertaining specialty acts to complement their amusing buffoonery, and the slight plot is rather better than usual. Action opens at a Charity Rodeo in New York where a famous writer of Western fiction and songs is to be featured. A suspicious columnist publicly announces that the gentleman will not appear as he is a fraud, an ignorant "tenderfoot." However, *Mitchell* (Dick Foran) takes the challenge and does very well on a rented horse until *Duke* and *Willoughby* (Abbott and Costello) inadvertently let loose a wild steer and pan-

demonium follows. The plot then concerns *Mitchell's* determination to learn all there is to be known about Western life on a ranch. *Duke* and *Willoughby* unwillingly join the party, and their behavior as inexperienced cowhands and *Willoughby's* efforts to evade marriage with an Indian belle, provide hilarious stunts.

Direction allows practically no dull lapses. The tunes sung by Dick Foran and the Merry Macs are melodious and cleverly interpolated into the action. Ella Fitzgerald sings her well-known "A Tisket, A Tasket," and her personality puts the song over as well as ever. Photography is excellent, and one musical number is particularly effective with ranch guests riding in the moonlight through spectacular Western country.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Good

❖

RINGS ON HER FINGERS ◇ ◇

Henry Fonda, Gene Tierney, Laird Cregar, John Shepperd, Spring Byington, Frank Orth, Henry Stephenson, Marjorie Gateson, George Lessey, Iris Adrian, Harry Hayden, Gwendolyn Logan. Original story by Robert Pirosh and Joseph Schrank. Screen play by Ken Englund. Direction by Rouben Mamoulian. 20th Century-Fox.

Since "Rings On Her Fingers" has an attractive heroine who decoys rich young men into the clutches of swindlers, it is faintly reminiscent of "The Lady Eve." It is, however, neither so spicy nor so well-written as that popular success. A salesgirl poses as the daughter of a pair of crooks, traveling with them and cooperating in all of their schemes until they swindle a young man who rouses her sympathy. She then attempts to return her share of the loot by arranging with a gambling salon manager to allow her naive victim to win from the house. In the end, although he finds out her connection with the swindlers, he forgives her and elopes with her. The picture falls far short of the promise of its popular cast and usually successful director, but it may be acceptable as an antidote for thought.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Ethically poor **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

SCATTERGOOD RIDES HIGH ◇ ◇

Guy Kibbee, Jed Prouty, Dorothy Moore, Charles Lind, Kenneth Howell, Regina Wallace, Frances Carson, Arthur Aylesworth, Paul White, Phillip Hurlic, Walter S. Baldwin, Jr., Lee Phelps. Screen play by Michael L. Simmons. Direction by Christy Cabanne. R.K.O.

This plot has little originality to recommend it, but *Scattergood* is the same kindly philosopher as in former pictures in this series. In this episode, he helps a youth regain a stud farm, which has been sold at auction, when he discovers that horses and their care mean more than any other interest in the boy's life. *Scattergood* says that if you can't "pound a nail with butter, use force," and he applies the theory in wresting the title of the farm from a socially ambitious woman who has no real interest in it. The characters are so broadly painted that some are caricatures, but the lack of subtlety is balanced by a wholesome purpose, and the film is suitable entertainment for family audiences.

Guy Kibbee makes an excellent *Scattergood;* Charles Lind is a pleasant, naive youth, and a small colored boy, Phillip Hurlic, steals scenes by his natural performance.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

SECRET AGENT OF JAPAN ◇ ◇

Preston Foster, Lynn Bari, Noel Madison, Sen Yung, Janis Carter, Steve Geray, Kurt Katch, Addison Richards, Ina Wolf, Hermine Sterler, Selmer Jackson, Frank Puglia. Direction by Irving Pichel. Twentieth Century-Fox.

This picture of Japanese Fifth Column activities in Shanghai in November, 1941, is timely. It shows the menace of the far-reaching espionage system and the efforts of a British Secret Service agent to uncover facts which, had they been learned in time, might have saved Pearl Harbor. It is only moderately well told and leaves some confusion concerning the various characters and their motives. Since it was impossible to find American-Japanese actors willing to enact the sinister roles, it was necessary to draft Noel Madison for the part of *Saito,* and he does well as the one person, who, the audience is certain, is a completely dastardly character.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Tense **Children, 8 to 12** Too complex and terrifying

❖

THIS TIME FOR KEEPS ◇ ◇

Ann Rutherford, Robert Sterling, Guy Kibbee, Irene Rich, Virginia Weidler, Henry O'Neill, Dorothy Morris, Richard Crane, Joseph Strauch, Jr., Connie Gilchrist. Screen play by Muriel Roy Bolton, Rian James and Harry Ruskin, based upon the characters created by Herman J. Mankiewicz. Direction by Charles Riesner. M.G.M.

A very light comedy of family life is made enjoyable because each member of the cast gives a spontaneous performance. While there is little to remember afterwards, the picture leaves one in a pleasant frame of mind, which is worth while in these days of tension. A generous but domineering father-in-law all but ruins the chances of a young man until the latter acquires enough initiative to make his own way. The cast are all good, but the funniest episodes concern the wife's 'teen age sister, *Harriett,* played by

Virginia Weidler, whose efforts to express herself terminate in many scrapes from which she emerges with a degree of success.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

TO BE OR NOT TO BE ◇ ◇

Carole Lombard, Jack Benny, Robert Stack, Lionel Atwill, Sig Rumann, Stanley Ridges, Felix Bressart, Tom Dugan, Charles Halton, George Lynn, Henry Victor, Maude Eburne, Armand Wright, Erno Verebes. Direction by Ernst Lubitsch. Screen play by Edwin Justus Mayer from an original story by Ernst Lubitsch and Melchior Lengyel. Musical direction by Werner Heyman. Alexander Korda. United Artists.

It is rather an amazing sidelight on the American sense of humor that anything as horrible as the occupation of Poland may be offered as an integral part of a comedy. Moreover, this film succeeds as comedy and is never offensive. The story is about *Joseph* and *Maria Tura,* stars of a Polish stock company, devoted to each other yet often torn asunder by professional jealousy. *Maria* can not resist the temptation to use her allure on handsome young men in the audience, and the title springs from the fact that when her husband enters into Hamlet's soliloquy, it is the signal for her current admirer to leave the audience and come to her dressing room. When war breaks over Poland, the actors are caught in Warsaw, but a young aviator who adores *Maria* escapes and later returns by plane to warn the *Turas* that a spy is about to expose all members of the Polish "underground." The resourceful troupers rise to the occasion and act themselves out of perilous situations at the expense of the Nazis whose obtuseness and regimentation is the object of subtle and also sledge-hammer wit. With Lubitsch as director and Jack Benny as leading man a compromise is necessary. It is not the best Lubitsch, although there are many suave, sophisticated touches, but Jack Benny minus his knock-'em-for-a-loop dialogue emerges with a good deal of credit.

For many people this picture is important because it is Carole Lombard's farewell, and they will be glad to remember her this way. She is not the half-mad comedienne, the overdressed, spoiled darling of previous films. Her approach is gentle; she does not even strive to appear beautiful most of the time, but every tone and expression is sure, her grasp of the character is complete, her comedy is delicious, and as she turns to go, one feels that her last appearance before the footlights is her best.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depends upon individual

Children, 8 to 12 Little interest

TO THE SHORES OF TRIPOLI ◇ ◇

John Payne, Maureen O'Hara, Randolph Scott, Nancy Kelly, William Tracy. Maxie Rosenbloom, Henry Morgan, Edmund MacDonald, Russell Hicks, Minor Watson, Ted North, Basil Walker, Charles Tannen, Alan Hale, Jr. Screen play by Lamar Trotti from an original story by Steve Fisher. Photographed in Technicolor. Direction by Bruce Humberstone. Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Dedicated to the Marine Corps, named from their song, and located at the San Diego Marine Base, "The Shores of Tripoli" is well calculated to inspire the public with increased interest in that already popular branch of the Service. To the accompaniment of martial music, rolling drums, and the drone of airplanes overhead, bright pictures flash on the screen: brilliant uniforms on parade, flags whipping in the wind, shells bursting in orange streaks over an indigo ocean. Color and movement and sound combine to raise the onlooker to a high pitch of enthusiasm.

The story follows a stock formula built around the process of imbuing an insolent, uncooperative recruit with the necessary esprit de corps. It takes the Pearl Harbor bombing and orders for his particular company to embark to subdue this aggravating young man. Of course, he performs a deed of heroism when the occasion arises and eventually wins the love of a charming nurse. Obviously, the plot is not what makes the picture worth seeing. The cast is adequate but, with the exception of Randolph Scott and William Tracy, not distinctive. As a whole, however, the film leaves an inspirational conception of the Marines in training.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 If mature situations are interpreted

❖

THE TUTTLES OF TAHITI ◇ ◇

Charles Laughton, Jon Hall, Peggy Drake, Victor Francen, Gene Reynolds, Florence Bayes, Curt Bois, Adeline de Walt Reynolds. Screen play by S. Lewis Meltzer and Robert Carson. Adaptation by James Hilton from the novel, "No More Gas," by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. Music by Roy Webb. Musical direction by C. Bakaleinikoff. Photography by Nicholas Musuraca, A.S.C. Direction by Charles Vidor. Produced by Sol Lesser. R.K.O.-Radio.

When life gets too complicated, there is sometimes an urge to throw everything overboard, and thus even for the most conscientious there is a vicarious joy in living for an hour or so with the life-loving, totally irresponsible *Tuttles* of Tahiti. *Jonas* has come from the States years before, and he and his children have intermarried with the natives and assumed their ways; only his ancient mother retains a sense of responsibility for such procedures as the payment of debts. The sprawling, heterogeneous family lives in

a great dilapidated house and is childishly dependent on kindly *Dr. Blondin* who stakes them to gasoline, the starting point of their activities. When they are absolutely broke several of the husky sons fill the tank of their boat and bring in a big catch of fish, but the money received is soon dissipated in betting on cock fights. One day in a terrific storm they manage to salvage a large ship, which brings in four hundred thousand francs, a perfect fortune in their eyes, but after a few days of riotous celebrating, this, too, is gone, and they are where they began—out of gas.

Charles Laughton fits the part of *Jonas* to perfection, a lovable, whimsical scamp, and the large cast is skilfully selected to portray all the members of the laughter-loving, improvident family. It is a Tahitian idyll, a warm and human picture of a fantastic way of living. Photography and musical background are delightful, and the director has guided the story with a masterly hand.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes, although more enjoyable from an adult point of view

Children, 8 to 12 Needs adult evaluation

❖

TWO YANKS IN TRINIDAD ◇ ◇

Pat O'Brien, Brian Donlevy, Janet Blair, Roger Clark, Donald MacBride, John Emery, Frank Sully, Veda Ann Borg, Clyde Fillmore. Screen play by Sy Bartlett, Richard Carroll and Harry Segall from story by Sy Bartlett. Direction by Gregory Ratoff. Columbia.

To enjoy this picture one must accept its mood of satirical nonsense. Two gangsters join the army for the purpose of carrying on their personal feud. Army life is distasteful to them but the event of Pearl Harbor arouses their latent patriotism and a situation occurs from which both emerge heroes.

The production is so farcical that it appears to be a satire on all satires. However, it is swiftly paced and may have appeal for those in search of very light amusement.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

WHAT'S COOKIN' ◇ ◇

Gloria Jean, Jane Frazee, Leo Carillo, Robert Paige, Billie Burke, Chas. Butterworth, Grace McDonald, Franklin Pangborne, The Andrews Sisters, Woody Herman and His Orchestra. Direction by Edward F. Cline. Universal.

The plot of this musical is so slight that it is hardly sufficient to hold interest. It concerns the way swing music supplants classical on a radio program, and it forms merely an excuse for individual song and dance numbers. Gloria Jean's lovely voice is an attraction but she needs more training as an actress. The humor is supplied by the veterans, Billie Burke, Leo Carrillo and Charles Butterworth; but a small disapproving child steals every scene she is in. The production will appeal mainly to those who particularly enjoy jazz music and amateur dancing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless

❖

WHO IS HOPE SCHUYLER? ◇ ◇

Joseph Allen, Jr., Mary Howard, Sheila Ryan, Ricardo Cortez, Janis Carter, Joan Valerie, Robert Lowery, Rose Hobart, Paul Guilfoyle, Wm. Newell, Pat Flaherty, Charles Trowbridge. Based on a novel by Stephen Ransome. Direction by Thomas Z. Loring. Twentieth Century-Fox.

The missing link in the clean-up campaign of an incumbent district attorney in a case against *Pearce,* a former D. A. (Ricardo Cortez), is a blonde payoff woman known as *Hope Schuyler.* She is the connection between *Pearce* and the city's gambling element, but she cannot be identified, and suspicion rests upon a number of women. Interest in the film is held by neat direction except in the last scene which looks as though the director had called for "lights, action, camera," but after all the mystery had to end some way.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Rather sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12 Not recommended

★ ★ ★

SHORT SUBJECTS

MARCH OF TIME ◇ ◇

(The Argentine Question)

R.K.O.-Radio.

Photographed as usual with an eye for fine pictorial effects and interesting subject matter, this number of "The March of Time" covers Argentina: beautiful buildings of Buenos Aires, governmental meetings, regiments of soldiers, factories, harbors, and the great cattle and grain country of the interior. Much of the narration is by an Argentinian, who explains the country's attitude towards world affairs and why it is still striving to maintain its neutrality. Exceptionally interesting for all ages.

❖

WHAT ABOUT DADDY? ◇ ◇

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The angle is strictly adult in this Pete Smith comedy about a young couple expecting a "blessed event." The father-to-be overwhelms his wife with solicitude and takes his role so seriously that when the baby finally arrives he collapses on a hospital bed. Fairly entertaining.

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The Corpse Vanishes
The Great Man's Lady
Henry and Dizzy
In This Our Life
Larceny, Inc.
The Mad Martindales
The Man Who Wouldn't Die
The Mayor of 44th Street
My Favorite Blonde
My Gal Sal
The Mystery of Marie Roget
Rio Rita
Saboteur
The Spoilers
Sunday Punch
Sundown Jim
This Gun for Hire
This Was Paris
True to the Army
The Wife Takes a Flyer

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Don Cossack Chorus
Spanish Fiesta

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FEATURE FILMS

BROADWAY ◇ ◇

George Raft, Pat O'Brien, Janet Blair, Brod Crawford, Marjorie Rambeau, Anne Gwynne, S. Z. Sakall, Edward S. Brophy, Marie Wilson, Gus Schilling, Ralf Harolde, Arthur Shields, Iris Adrian, Elaine Morey, Dorothy Moore, Nestor Paiva, Abner Biberman, Damian O'Flynn, Mack Gray. Screen play by Felix Jackson and John Bright, adapted by Bruce Manning from the Ted Harris stage production by Philip Dunning and George Abbott. Produced by Bruce Manning. Directed by William A. Seiter. Universal Pictures.

"Broadway," once popular on the stage, is a story of the prohibition era, of high jackers, murder and revenge. William Seiter has done good directorial work in giving an authentic picture of an unsavory era and in making the story plausible and interesting. It is told in flash-backs, and interest is aroused by the fact that George Raft plays himself, a successful movie actor, returning on a visit to New York after years of absence. He revisits the location of a speakeasy and finds the place being remodeled into a bowling alley. Memories both sad and happy come to him, and as he muses over the past, he tells the story to a night watchman. It is a drab and sordid tale of his love for his dancing partner, her infatuation with the bootlegger who owns the establishment, and the tragedy which follows. It is well acted and is interesting, although perhaps some may not like to recall those unhappy, hysterical post-war days.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sordid and violent **Children, 8 to 12** No

THE CORPSE VANISHES ◇ ◇

Bela Lugosi, Luana Walters, Tristram Coffin, Elizabeth Russell, Minerva Urecal, Angelo Rossitto, Joan Barclay, Kenneth Harlan, Gwen Kenyon, Vince Barnett, Frank Moran, George Eldridge. Screen play by Harvey Gates. Original story by Sam Robins and Gerald Schnitzer. Direction by Wallace Fox. Produced by Sam Katzman and Jack Dietz. Monogram Pictures.

As the title implies, this is a horror thriller. A crazed scientist abducts young brides from the altar in order to secure glandular hormones to rejuvenate his aged wife. A newspaper girl on the trail of a story visits the mysterious house where sliding panels, dark passages, and monstrous freaks lend atmospheric touches to a morbid tale.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

THE GREAT MAN'S LADY ◇ ◇

Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Brian Donlevy, Katherine Stevens, Thurston Hall, Lloyd Corrigan, Etha McDaniel, Frank M. Thomas, William S. Davidson, Lillian Yarbo, Helen Lynd, Mary Treen. Based on a short story by Vina Delmar. Direction by William A. Wellman. Paramount.

About the middle of the nineteenth century, *Hannah Sempler* eloped from her conservative Philadelphia home and, like many another girl of her time, went west with her young husband to become a pioneer woman. "The Great Man's Lady" is the story of their life as she describes it to her husband's would-be biographer, and as it progresses it reveals a poignant drama of a wife whose

influence enabled a weak man to achieve success. The plot has many ramifications and is often surcharged with pathos, but the picture escapes sentimentality because of the sterling qualities of the dominant character. In her old age she looks back without a trace of self-pity, upon a life of hardship and sorrow, and she rejoices in her staunch fidelity to the man she loved.

Barbara Stanwyck as *Hannah* is first seen as an old woman. As the narrative goes back to her youth she is a lovely young girl. She is remarkably real in both phases. Joel McCrea plays the part of her husband and is good, though not at his best in the role, Brian Donlevy is excellent as the gambler who becomes her lifelong friend. Costumes and settings of the various periods are interesting, and the pioneer days in the West are realistically depicted. The picture will undoubtedly please many audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting but heavy

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

HENRY AND DIZZY ◇ ◇

Jimmy Lydon, Charles Smith, Mary Anderson, John Litel, Olive Blakeney, Olin Howland. Original story by Val Burton. Direction by Hugh Bennett. Paramount.

Henry Aldrich smashes an out-board motor boat and then ruins three hundred and ninety dollars worth of store and household furnishings in an effort to earn money by cleaning house with an ancient vacuum cleaner. After making a clean breast of his misdeeds to his father, he gets off scott free and even wins a beautiful new boat. Thus the picture flaunts a bad example for adolescents. Although some of the episodes are true to life, most of the comedy is exaggerated in the manner of the comic strips. Designed for laughter, the film will entertain those who like slapstick action, but it is poorer than most of the current films of family life and certainly not as good as the radio programs concerning *Henry*.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable influence

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

IN THIS OUR LIFE ◇ ◇

Bette Davis, Olivia de Haviland, George Brent, Dennis Morgan, Frank Craven, Chas. Coburn, Billie Burke, Hattie McDaniel, Lee Patrick, Ernest Anderson, Mary Servoss, William B. Davidson, Edward Fielding, John Hamilton, William Forrest. Screen play by Howard Koch based on novel by Ellen Glasgow. Photography by Ernie Haller, A.S.C. Music by Max Steiner. Direction by John Huston. Warner Bros.

This is an unpleasant but dramatic character study of a thoroughly wicked young woman whose selfish and predatory instincts are accepted and excused by her family. Only her uncle, a modern buccaneer himself, understands her, and he admires her for being the same sort of ruthless persons he is. She is responsible for breaking up her sister's marriage, for her husband's suicide, and also for a death which she tries to blame on an innocent colored boy. The characters are sharply drawn and well acted, but lack subtlety; the good are too good and the bad too bad to be absolutely convincing, and the story, while it claims one's interest, leaves one questioning why it must be told at all.

The direction is good, although the film is not an outstanding achievement for John Huston. Bette Davis is, of course, excellent in a role which wins no sympathy at any time. Among the supporting cast, Billie Burke is exceptionally fine as a neurotic invalid, a performance which is in marked contrast to the fluttery, amusing roles usually given her. Ernest Anderson and Hattie McDaniel are also excellent. Mellow, beautiful photography, a good musical score and the fine cast will attract attention, but it is not a picture which may be unreservedly recommended for any entertaining qualities.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Stark tragedy

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

LARCENY, INC. ◇ ◇

Edward G. Robinson, Jane Wyman, Broderick Crawford, Jack Carson, Anthony Quinn, Edward Brophy, Harry Davenport, John Qualen, Barbara Jo Allen, Grant Mitchell, Jackie C. Gleason, Andrew Tombes. Screen play by Everett Freeman and Edwin Gilbert. Based upon a play by Laura and S. J. Perelman. Direction by Lloyd Bacon. Produced by Hal B. Wallis. Warner Bros.

A clever idea was waylaid somewhere in this satirical farce. A crook, paroled from Sing Sing, buys a luggage shop for the single purpose of using it as a blind by which to tunnel into the vault of the bank next door. In spite of all he can do to discourage business, the shop proves so lucrative that he is beside himself in attempting to hold to his purpose. With his confederates and against his "better judgment," he becomes a hero, and rich! But his crooked streak still remains. Although the picture is played for comedy, its lack of subtlety limits enjoyment for most audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE MAD MARTINDALES ◇ ◇

Jane Withers, Marjorie Weaver, Alan Mobray, Jimmy Lydon, Byron Barr, George Reeves, Charles Lane, Kathleen Howard, Sen Yung, Otto Hoffman, Tom Yuen, Robert Greig, Brandon Hurst. Screen play by Francis Edwards Faragoh based on play by Wesley Towner. Direction by Alfred Werker. Produced by Walter Morosco. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Jane Withers again has a sweetly sentimental Cinderella story which makes no demands upon her abilities and which will appeal to the romantically inclined. She saves

the family fortunes in spite of her zany father's interference, and wins a handsome beau besides. The picturesque settings of 1900, outmoded autos and manners of the day, and the heroine's strong "feminist" ideas add zest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** If interested

THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T DIE ◇ ◇

Lloyd Nolan, Marjorie Weaver, Helene Reynolds, Henry Wilcoxon, Richard Derr, Paul Harvey, Billy Bevan, Olin Howland, Robert Emmett Kenae, LeRoy Mason, Jeff Corey, Francis Ford. Screen play by Arnaud d'Usseau based on novel by Clayton Rawson and the character "Michael Shayne" by Brett Halliday. Direction by Herbert I. Leeds. Produced by Sol. Wurtzel. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Lloyd Nolan is an excellent actor who apparently is perfectly at ease as *Michael Shayne*, detective at large. In this episode of his adventures, his fiancee does not appear at all, and thus his entire attention may be given to the matter at hand. This in a way is fortunate, since a corpse which will not stay dead is problem enough for any man to handle. *Shayne* is called into a country home at the request of a girl who is scared stiff by nocturnal happenings which other members of the household seem determined to ignore. She is newly married, and that *Shayne* has to pretend to be her absent husband complicates matters somewhat, but the detective takes it in his stride. The only trouble is that, when the mystery is unravelled no one in the audience is sufficiently interested in the people concerned to care greatly. Photography and settings contribute to the eerie atmosphere.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Confused plot **Children, 8 to 12** No

THE MAYOR OF 44th STREET ◇ ◇

George Murphy, Anne Shirley, William Gargan, Richard Barthelmess, Joan Merrill, Freddy Martin, Millard Mitchell, Rex Downing, Roberta Smith, Mary Wickes, Eddie Hart. Screen play by Lewis R. Foster and Frank Ryan from a story by Robert D. Andrews, suggested by Collier's Magazine article. Direction by Alfred E. Green. Produced by Cliff Reid. R.K.O.

American audiences may be conditioned to gang warfare, but when kids take on the racket it is even less palatable. The *Mayor* is a racketeer who shakes down band leaders for a cut in their salary. When he is sent to the penitentiary for his crimes, his crown is assumed by a boy of fourteen who, with his gang of rough friends, ruins band after band for the fun of causing a disturbance. George Murphy plays the role of a kindly sentimentalist who tries to reform the boy, but whose efforts are in vain until the original *Mayor* is paroled, and the youth is repelled by his criminal brutality.

Band music, popular songs, and clever dancers add glamour and entertainment to the sordid plot, and an excellent cast is also a drawing card. But it is a degrading picture which, let us hope, no one will imagine has its actual counterpart in American life.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

MY FAVORITE BLONDE ◇ ◇

Bob Hope, Madeleine Carroll, Gale Sondergaard, George Zucco, Lionel Royce, Walter Kingsford, Victor Varconi, Otto Reichow, Esther Howard, Edward Gargan. Screen play by Don Hartman and Frank Butler. Direction by Sidney Lanfield. Paramount.

Spy melodrama is combined with hilarious comedy in a picture which will be especially entertaining for those who like Bob Hope's variety of comedy. As *Larry Haines* he is booked with a very funny and appealing penguin in a vaudeville act. Into their dressing room bursts a glamorous blonde British agent (Madeleine Carroll) who uses threats and wiles to gain *Larry's* assistance in her travels to the Pacific coast with precious code information about a flight of bombers to England. In order to baffle the pursuing Nazis, *Larry* impersonates a famous children's specialist, a truck driver, even a corpse in a coffin, and the changes are so rapid that it is sometimes difficult to follow the intricacies of the plot. Hope and Carroll make a good team. The direction is well balanced to feature both the comedy element and the excitement of the chase.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Rather sophisticated **Children, 8 to 12** Tense

MY GAL SAL ◇ ◇

Rita Hayworth, Victor Mature, John Sutton, Carole Landis, James Gleason, Phil Silvers, Walter Catlett, Mona Maris, Frank Orth, Stanley Andrews, Margaret Moffat, Libby Taylor, John Kelly, Hermes Pan, Gregory Gaye, Andrew Tombes, Albert Conti, Charles Arnt. Screen play by Seton I. Miller, Darrel Ware, and Karl Tunberg. Photographed in Technicolor. Direction by Irving Cummings. 20th Century-Fox.

In its period costumes, settings, and musical emphasis, "My Gal Sal" is reminiscent of "The Strawberry Blonde." It is adapted from Theodore Dreiser's outline of the life of his brother, Paul Dresser, who wrote many song hits, the most lasting of which is "The Banks of the Wabash." The film is named from another of his compositions and incorporates in all, six of his songs, as well as others of the same type. It successfully recreates the elaborate and picturesque sort of musical entertainment which was popular in the Nineties, and on this account will appeal to many who remember that period.

The story itself is less interesting. Although

Victor Mature gives an excellent portrayal, Paul is an unsympathetic hero, and the account of his rise from farm boy to popular song writer is not so forceful a drama of achievement as one might expect. Rita Hayworth is lovely as the girl who inspires his success, and her beauty is enhanced by the color photography. It is interesting to note that the dances, under the direction of Hermes Pan, are typical of the period and without anachronisms in steps or rhythms.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 If interested in the type

♦

THE MYSTERY OF MARIE ROGET ◇ ◇

Patric Knowles, Maria Montez, Maria Ouspenskaya, John Litel, Nell O'Day, Edward Norris, Lloyd Corrigan. Screen play by Michel Jacoby from the story by Edgar Allen Poe. Direction by Phil Rosen. Universal.

It is better not to have Poe's story clearly in mind when you see this film, for the author has merely used the facts of the original tale as a foundation upon which to build an elaborate, gruesome mystery. Oddly enough, it is better Poe than it would have been if his plot had been sedulously followed. Poe's uncanny touch is there and a sense of inevitability, even a weird beauty in the manifestation of evil. The scene is Paris in 1889. *Marie Roget* disappears, returns and vanishes again into the night with a piercing cry. A celebrated criminologist of his day, *Dr. Dupin,* is permitted to assist the police in the solution of the mystery. This is not a pretentious film and it sometimes shows evidence of hasty production, but the cast is unusually well selected, photography is pleasing and suspense is maintained to the very end.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Only for those conditioned in tense mysteries

Children, 8 to 12 Too gruesome

♦

RIO RITA ◇ ◇

Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Kathryn Grayson, John Carroll, Patricia Dane, Tom Conway, Peter Whitney, Barry Nelson, Arthur Space, Dick Rich, Eva Puig, Joan Valerie, Mitchell Lewis, Eros Volusia. Screen play by Richard Connell and Gladys Lehman. Special material for Abbott and Costello by John Grant. Direction by S. Sylvan Simon. Produced by Pandro S. Berman. M.G.M.

For all-out nonsense and their own particular kind of clowning, Abbott and Costello take another blue ribbon in this crazy-quilt comedy, which is, of course, written especially for them. Nothing is left of the original "Rio Rita" except a few songs, and the new version is a collection of gags held together by more kinds of screen material than any one ought to jam into one production. It includes a Mexican fiesta, cowboys on the range, a Brazilian speciality dance, opera sung by Kathryn Grayson, popular numbers by John Carroll, Nazi spies, Federal agents, murder, time bombs, love interest, bedroom scenes, and custard pie comedy. Abbott and Costello play the part of tramps who are given jobs as house detectives in a hotel on the Mexican border where a Nazi spy ring is operating. Since the antics and patter of these two comedians are the major portion of the show, the film will be most appreciated by Abbott and Costello fans.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Might be tiring

♦

SABOTEUR ◇ ◇

Priscilla Lane, Robert Cummings, Otto Kruger, Alan Baxter, Clem Bevan, Norman Lloyd, Alma Kruger, Vaughan Glazer, Dorothy Peterson, Ian Wolfe, Frances Carson, Murray Alper, Kathryn Adams, Pedro de Cordoba, Billy Curtis, Marie LeDeaux, Anita Bolster, Jeanne Romer, Lynn Romer. Original screen play by Peter Viertel, Joan Harrison and Dorothy Parker. Direction by Alfred Hitchcock. Universal.

At some time or another almost everyone has had the experience of a nightmare in which he is in a desperate predicament and no one will take him seriously when he calls for help. "Saboteur" leaves that same impression. A young worker in an aviation plant comes to a horrifying end when a fire breaks out and the extinguisher he uses proves to be filled with gasoline. *Barry,* his best friend, is accused of sabotage. *Harry's* one chance of exoneration is capture of the man he alone knows is guilty, and he must gather evidence against deadly Nazi agents while the police are hell-bent on his capture. Off across the desert he hitch-hikes to a ranch oasis, thence to a mountain lodge, where he meets the heroine, drawn into his misfortune willy-nilly, on to an abandoned mining camp and across the country to the stronghold of the Nazis in the mansion of a New York socialite. The thrills increase in full crescendo until the last adventure fairly leaves one panting.

Hitchcock's direction is top-notch for a thriller, and has guided a talented cast to the best advantage. Robert Cummings and Otto Kruger are perhaps the most outstanding, but all are good, from the principals to Murray Alper as the truck driver and the various freaks of the traveling circus encountered in one phase of the flight. Much more subtle than the garden variety are the villains, whose calculating cruelty is combined with such pleasant qualities as the love of children and enthusiasm for symponic music. The lighter touch is supplied by ludicrous twists in the plot and good comedy dialogue.

In retrospect perhaps some of *Barry's* escapes are too miraculous for belief, and

the slur cast on the intelligence of all branches of the police except the F.B.I. is disconcerting. It seems fairly obvious that if the F.B.I. had been summoned in Scene One, there would have been no story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Undermines confidence in police protection

Children, 8 to 12 Too terrifying

THE SPOILERS ◇ ◇

Marlene Dietrich, Randolph Scott, John Wayne, Margaret Lindsay, Harry Carey, Richard Barthelmess, William Farnum, George Cleveland, Russell Simpson, Robert W. Service. Screen play by Lawrence Hazard and Tom Reid from novel by Rex Beach. Direction by Ray Enright. Produced by Frank Lloyd. Universal Pictures.

It is interesting to see this old blood-and-thunder story come to life again on the screen, although it seems less thrilling this time, possibly because it has been done too often or because there have been so many tales of the rip-roaring Alaska frontiers, that brawls over claim-jumping and gambling-den sirens have begun to pall. Even some of the cast seem unable to enter enthusiastically into the action. On the other hand, the free-for-all at the end is almost too realistic to seem real. Harry Carey gives a good performance, and Marlene Dietrich, costumed with feathers and frills, is alluring, if one can forgive her for being always so miraculously well-groomed amid the mud and filth of her surroundings.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Ethically poor and too brutal

Children, 8 to 12 Most unsuitable

SUNDAY PUNCH ◇ ◇

William Lundigan, Jean Rogers, Dan Daily, Jr., Guy Kibbee, J. Carrol Naish, Connie Gilchrist, Sam Levene, Leo Gorcey, "Rags" Ragland, Douglass Newland, Anthony Caruso, Michael Browne. Screen play by Fay and Michael Kanin and Allen Rivkin based on original story by Fay and Michael Kanin. Direction by Irving Starr. Produced by David Miller. M.G.M.

Prize-fight pictures seem to follow a rubber stamp formula, and this one is no exception. Two fighters are in love with the same girl, and, because all sorts of misunderstandings enter into the triangle, when the men finally meet in the ring the fight is a particularly vicious one. In "Sunday Punch" the pugilists happen to live in the same boarding house and are rivals for the hand of the landlady's niece, a vaudeville actress temporarily out of a job. The story is too weak to hold much interest, although the acting is adequate.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not worth recommending

Children, 8 to 12 No

SUNDOWN JIM ◇ ◇

John Kimbrough, Virginia Gilmore, Arleen Whelan, Joseph Sawyer, Paul Hurst, Moroni Olsen, Don Costello, LeRoy Mason, Lane Chandler, James Bush, Charles Tannon, Cliff Edwards, Paul Sutton, Eddy Waller, Tom Fadden, Frank McGrath. Screen play by Robert F. Metzler and William Bruckner based on Collier's novel by Ernest Haycox. Direction by James Tinling. Produced by Sol M. Wurtzel. 20th Century-Fox.

Sundown Jim may not appeal to the sophisticates, but he will delight small boys because he is an athletic hero with a cool, fearless, imaginative way of handling dangerous situations. *Jim* is the new sheriff who comes to Reservation, Arizona, to free the town from the strangle hold of a rancher and his band of hired thugs. He never uses a gun, but his fists are very effective, and law and order follow a street brawl where miscreants on every side bite the dust.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 Matter of taste

THIS GUN FOR HIRE ◇ ◇

Veronica Lake, Robert Preston, Laird Cregar, Alan Ladd, Tully Marshall, Marc Lawrence, Olin Howlin, Roger Imhof, Pamela Blake, Frank Ferguson, Victor Kilian, Patricia Farr, Harry Shannon, Chas. C. Wilson, Mikhail Rasumny, Bernadene Hayes. Based on novel by Graham Green. Direction by Frank Tuttle. Paramount.

Another tale of espionage and intrigue to undermine American war effort is presented without spectacular effects, but with conviction. Laird Cregar, as *Gates* one of the Fifth Columnists, hires a man to commit murder. When this stooge discovers that he has been double-crossed, he plans revenge. A lovely blonde is selected to do some investigating on the side and is saved from a horrible fate only by the last minute efforts of her fiance, a police detective.

While the story is an unpleasant one, it is very well done.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very exiciting

Children, 8 to 12 No

THIS WAS PARIS ◇ ◇

Ann Dvorak, Ben Lyon, Griffith Jones, Robert Morley, Harold Huth, Mary Maguire, Vera Boggetti, Frederick Burtwell, Marian Spencer, Billy Holland, Hay Petrie. Screen play by Brock Williams and Edward Dryhurst, based on original story by Gordon Wellesley and Basil Woon. Direction by John Harlow. Produced at Teddington Studios. Warner Bros.

This film gives a tragic picture of Paris in the last days of 1940, before its fall: the undermining Fifth Column activities in all classes of society, the uncertainty and ignorance of Parisians, the bewilderment of Army officials, and the disillusionment of those who had sincere if misguided faith in a "new order" and peace between Germany

and France. The plot concerns the adventures of *Captain Hamilton* of the English Intelligence and an American girl who is suspected of working against the Allied Powers. Her innocence is finally established, but not until Paris has fallen. In the end the two join other refugees hoping to carry on elsewhere for victory. The characters are not built up for sympathy, and one cares little what is in store for them. The film can hardly be recommended as entertainment, and, since it adds nothing new to what is already common knowledge about France, it has little value.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value **Children, 8 to 12** Too confusing

❖

TRUE TO THE ARMY ◇ ◇

Judy Canova, Allan Jones, Ann Miller, Jerry Colonna, William Demarest, Clarence Kolb, William Wright, Edward Pawley, Edwin Miller, Arthur Loft, Gordon Jones. Direction by Albert S. Rogell. Paramount.

Featured in this slapstick musical are Ann Miller's tap dancing, Allan Jones' singing, and the clowning of Judy Canova and Jerry Colonna. Judy Canova, in the role of a trapeze artist who is wanted as a witness to a murder, seeks refuge from the police by disguising herself as a soldier and hiding in an army camp. The situations are what might be expected, and the picture is fun if you like its type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable **Children, 8 to 12** Passable

❖

THE WIFE TAKES A FLYER ◇ ◇

Joan Bennett, Franchot Tone, Allyn Joslyn, Cecil Cunningham, Roger Clark, Lloyd Corrigan, Lyle Latell, Georgia Caine, Barbara Brown, Erskine Sanford. Screen play by Gina Kaus and Jay Dratler from story by Gina Kaus. Direction by Richard Wallace. Columbia Pictures.

This is a completely absurd and highly entertaining take-off on Nazi and spy melodramas. It ranges from satirical farce to slapstick, but even the slapstick is unusually funny. The main difference between this picture and other films which have made fun of the Nazis is that this one has no flavor of serious propaganda. It takes for granted the evils of the system and concentrates on laughing at its absurdities, which are embodied in *Major Zellfritz* (deliciously played by Allyn Joslyn, who quite runs away with the picture). *Zellfritz* is a caricature of a Nazi official who looks so like Hitler that he salutes himself in the mirror. The plot is equally nonsensical and could not possibly be taken seriously. There are situations which might easily have been off color, but they are treated in such a way that there are no implications of the kind one might expect.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** Harmless, though possibly over their heads

★ ★ ★

SHORT SUBJECTS

DON COSSACK CHORUS ◇ ◇

Warner Bros.

The famous male chorus is presented in a natural setting which makes the picture seem effortless and casual and thoroughly delightful. While they ride magnificently, gather around the camp fire, serenade pretty girls, or join in difficult native dances, their wonderful voices rise in glorious song and leave an impression of undying beauty. Excellent for family.

❖

SPANISH FIESTA ◇ ◇

Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, by arrangement with E. Hurtok. Music by Rimsky-Korsakov. Musical director Rfrem Kurtz. Orchestral arrangements by Hugo Friedhofer. Warner Bros.

The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo interprets the Old Spanish music and dances of peasants, gypsies and noblemen. As in all modern Russian ballets, the really impressive choreography is done by the stars (Toumanova and Massine), but the beautiful technicolor and the exquisite music and dancing give this short unusual general interest. Family interest.

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JUNE 1942

FEATURE FILMS

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Bambi
Beyond the Blue Horizon
Dr. Broadway
Down Texas Way
The Falcon Takes Over
Fingers at the Window
I Married an Angel
Juke Girl
Lady Gangster
The Magnificent Dope
Maisie Gets Her Man
Meet the Stewarts
Mexican Spitfire Sees a Ghost
Moontide
My Favorite Spy
Ship Ahoy
Ships with Wings
Syncopation
Take a Letter, Darling
Tarzan's New York Adventures
This Above All
Tortilla Flat
Twin Beds
Whispering Ghosts

SHORT SUBJECTS

Bomber
Further Prophecies of Nostradamus
The Woman in the House
Women in Defense

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FEATURE FILMS

BAMBI ◇ ◇

Supervising Director, David D. Hand. Story direction by Perce Pearce. Music by Frank Churchill and Edward H. Plumb. Walt Disney Productions. R.K.O.

Readers who loved "Bambi" and have long looked forward to its appearance on the screen will rejoice in this new Disney masterpiece which achieves true excellence in all branches. The forest scenes are beautiful, with wonderful dimensional effect, the characters are adorable, the animation is beautifully smooth, and the music is delightful. Unlike most of Disney's drawings, the animals are true to life. That they talk is a bit startling at first, but soon acceptable. Parents will enjoy the questions and remarks of the young animals because they have heard exactly the same thing from their own small fry. The story starts with the birth of *Bambi* and tells of his various adventures as he grows to maturity: losing his mother; fighting for and winning a mate, *Fileen;* rescuing her from the hunters' dogs, and escaping from a forest fire. It ends with the birth of two fauns, twin sons of *Bambi* and *Fileen.* It is excellent for children with the possible exception of the sad part where *Bambi* calls for his dead mother, but this scene is handled with restraint. Also there are no unpleasant characters, Man being the only villain, and he never actually appears. The plot has sufficient interest for adults and still has no harrowing or scary parts to spoil it for children. The film is exceptionally good family entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Excellent though Emotional

❖

BEYOND THE BLUE HORIZON ◇ ◇

Dorothy Lamour, Richard Denning, Jack Haley, Patricia Morison, Walter Abel, Helen Gilbert, Elizabeth Patterson, Edward Fielding, Gerald Oliver Smith, Frank Reicher, Arthur Biberman, Charles Stevens, Charles Cane, Bill Telaak, Gogo. Direction by Alfred Santell. Paramount.

If vagaries of plot can be overlooked in an abundance of beautiful Technicolor jungles, trained animals, and wild flights, against a good musical background, this picture should prove good entertainment for those who like Dorothy Lamour.

The story is a complicated one concerning a circus manager, his press-agent, an heiress gone native, and her more civilized relatives, all struggling through the jungle to find the proof of the girl's identity. Deserting natives and a wild elephant make their task difficult, but the daring feats of the circus manager and his pet lion bring about a happy ending.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Light entertainment

Children, 8 to 12 Rather exciting

DR. BROADWAY ◇ ◇

MacDonald Carey, Jean Phillips, J. Carrol Naish, Richard Lane, Edward Cianelli, Joan Woodbury, Arthur Loft, Warren Hymer. Direction by Anthony Mann. Paramount.

The underworld and a *Dr. Timothy Lane* are brought together to their ultimate mutual benefit when a girl is persuaded by the doctor not to leap from a window sill. *Dr. Lane* gets himself into a lot of trouble, however, before the happy ending. This film is an average B class program filler.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

DOWN TEXAS WAY ◇ ◇

Buck Jones, Tim McCoy, Raymond Hatton, Luana Walters, Dave O'Brien, Lois Austin, Glenn Strange, Harry Woods, Tom London, Kansas Moehring, Jack Daley, Silver the white horse. Original screen play by Jess Bowers. Direction by Howard Bretherton. Monogram Pictures.

Audiences unfamiliar with the three Rough Riders will find the opening sequences of their adventures somewhat confusing, for at first the newcomer does not distinguish between *Buck* and *Tim,* nor realize that they are friends of *Sandy,* a sheriff in trouble. But soon it all clears up and the villains are thwarted in their nefarious plans to pin a murder upon *Sandy* which was actually committed by their leader. The plot is well worked out, and the entire cast, old hands at this type of action film, play their parts exceptionally well. The film has beautiful riding, plenty of shooting, and enough tight spots for the Rough Riders to wiggle out of to delight small boys in search of vicarious adventure.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 If they like the type

Children, 8 to 12 If conditioned to Westerns

❖

THE FALCON TAKES OVER ◇ ◇

George Sanders, Lynn Bari, James Gleason, Allen Gleason, Helen Gilbert, Ward Bond, Edward Gargan, Anne Revere, George Cleveland, Harry Shannon, Hans Conried. Screen play by Lynn Root and Frank Fenton based on characters created by Michael Arlen from the novel "Farewell, My Lovely." Direction by Irving Reis. Produced by Howard Benedict. R.K.O.

Perhaps it is just as well in the light of censorship that this film bears practically no relation to the novel from which its characters were "created," although if faithfully reproduced the characters would at least have given the picture novelty. As it is, the film is just another melodrama featuring the amateur sleuth, known as *"The Falcon,"* who regularly outsmarts the police in running down criminals and kisses all the girls he meets. This time the killer is a huge moron, played with no little realism by Ward Bond. *"The Falcon"* is drawn into the case when this brute shanghais his bodyguard and steals his car in an effort to track down a double-crossing, blonde ex-sweetheart. The plot is too complicated to hold undivided interest and Sanders' characterization of the blase *Falcon* seems exaggerated.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

FINGERS AT THE WINDOW ◇ ◇

Lew Ayres, Laraine Day, Basil Rathbone, Walter Kingsford, Miles Mander, Charles D. Brown, Cliff Clark, James Flavin, Russell Gleason, William Tannen, Mark Daniels, Bert Roach, Russell Hicks, Charles Wagenheim, Robert Homans. Screen play by Rose Caylor and Lawrence P. Bachmann from a story by Rose Caylor. Direction by Charles Lederer. Photography by Harry Stradling, A.S.C., and Charles Lawton, A.S.C. Produced by Irving Starr. M-G-M.

There is plenty of horror in this film concerning a doctor who hypnotizes subjects into doing his murdering, stirring up a regular Chicago crime-wave. An out-of-work actor, finding a girl threatened with being the next victim, sets out to protect her by solving the crime for the police. Basil Rathbone gives a smooth performance as the arch criminal, Lew Ayres is convincing, and Laraine Day convincingly exasperating. Direction and photography enhance the suspense. It is a grim, exciting story, more subtle than routine horror films.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 Too gruesome and scary

❖

I MARRIED AN ANGEL ◇ ◇

Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, Edward Everett Horton, Binnie Barnes, Reginald Owen, Douglass Dumbrille, Mona Maris, Janis Carter, Inez Cooper, Leonid Kinsky, Anne Jeffreys, Marion Rosamond. Screen play by Anita Loos, based on the musical adaptation by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart of the play by Vaszary Janos. Direction by Major W. S. Van Dyke II. Produced by Hunt Stromberg. Musical score by Herbert Stothart. Songs by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart. M-G-M.

This Broadway success comes to the screen with all the opulence and fanfare and glitter filmdom can conjure, and yet when the last flicker from the brightest jewel has died away, whether you like it or not is purely a matter of taste. Certainly it is different from all other pictures. After a prologue of moderate length all activity slips over into the realm of dreams, and a dream it remains until almost the final moment. He who slumbers is a pampered worldling, *Count Palaffi,* advised by a fatherly old gentleman to give up his riotous merrymaking with all the gay and careless beauties of Old Budapest and to "marry an angel." At his birthday costume ball a faltering little angel has appeared with a broken wing and a wobbly halo, and in the count's dream she is the celestial

creature he has married with all the beauty and singular ineptitude for modern society one might expect in a being from another sphere. It is very clever dream psychology, with people and incidents distorted or enhanced or speeded up to a feverish tempo. There is even a touch akin to Salvador Dali. The humor is sly, raffish, buoyant by turns, sometimes sophisticated enough to produce a gasp.

With Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald in the leading roles, there is, of course, glorious singing, and the music is charming throughout the film, but many of those who admire these actors will long for a return to the simple, warm-hearted, romantic parts they have played in the past.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too sophisticated and probably boring

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

JUKE GIRL ◇ ◇

Ann Sheridan, Ronald Reagan, Richard Whorf, Gene Lockhart, Alan Hale, Betty Brewer, Howard da Silva, Wille Best. Screen play by A. I. Bezzerides from story by Theodore Pratt. Direction by Curtis Bernhardt. Warner Bros.

Although the title refers to the role played by Ann Sheridan, interest is centered largely upon the male characters and upon the plot, which is woven around injustice meted out to truck farmers by a ruthless, unprincipled middleman. Since the problem is settled by violence, murder, and lynching, the film will appeal only to those who enjoy lusty melodrama. It is well acted, but it is not an important contribution to screen entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

LADY GANGSTER ◇ ◇

Faye Emerson, Julie Bishop, Frank Wilcox, Roland Drew, Jackie C. Gleason, Ruth Ford, Virginia Brissac, Dorothy Vaughan, Dorothy Adams, DeWolf Hopper, Leah Baird. Screen play by Anthony Coldewey based on play by Dorothy Mackaye and Carlton Miles. Direction by Florian Roberts. Warner Bros.

This picture follows the suggestion in the title. It tells the story of a girl from a small town who, because she is down on her luck, is willing to become a "come-on" girl for bank robbers. Throughout the action she wins little sympathy because her reactions and behavior are always colored by what she believes is injustice to her personally, and the fadeout at the end, with her in the arms of a decent man, is hardly what she deserves under the circumstances. The prison scenes are unpleasant, with stool pigeons telling false stories and a matron willing to free the girl in order to get the reward for stolen money. It is destructive of confidence in the system of orienting women prisoners back to civil life.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE MAGNIFICENT DOPE ◇ ◇

Henry Fonda, Lynn Bari, Don Ameche, Edward Everett Horton, George Barbier, Frand Orth, Roseanne Murray, Kitty McHugh, Marietta Canty, Hobart Cavanaugh, Hal K. Dawson. Screen play by George Seaton. Original story by Joseph Schrand. Direction by Walter Lang. Produced by William Perlberg. 20th Century-Fox.

Poor Henry Fonda is evidently scheduled to continue playing the role of a yokel who manages to turn the tables on city slickers. He is good in this sort of part, however, putting into his characterizations just the right mixture of helpless innocence and turning-worm astuteness to endear himself to sympathetic audiences who agree with him that "shrouds have no pockets" and "we have only one life to live." As *Tad Page* in "The Magnificent Dope," he falls into the clutches of the promoters of a success school, beats them at their own game, and even wins the hand of the lovely, hard-boiled secretary. The film is quite funny in spots, and the success school idea is an amusing take-off of salesmanship and sales psychology, but the idea could have been put over in one cartoon without taking up the time of a good cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Lightly entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless

❖

MAISIE GETS HER MAN ◇ ◇

Ann Sothern, Red Skelton, Leo Gorcey, Donald Meek, Walter Catlett, Allen Jenkins, Lloyd Corrigan, Fritz Feld, Ben Welton, "Rags" Ragland, Frank Jones, Pamela Blake, Screen play by Betty Reinhardt and Mary McCall Jr., from original story by Betty Reinhardt and Ethel Hill based on characters by Wilson Collison. Direction by Roy Del Ruth. M-G-M.

Ann Sothern again appears as *Maisie,* the cheerful little trouper who never lets trouble down her. Her show breaks down and she has to get work. She becomes a secretary for a salesman of bottled water, who turns out to be a crook. In the meantime, Red Skelton as *Hap* puts some gin in the tap water to show that it is a sparkling beverage, and the results are startling. Red Skelton and Anne Sothern carry the show by their amusing antics, although a number of types of vaudeville actors add to the entertainment value. The plot is light and the picture is good fun because it is so far removed from any reference to world troubles.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Enjoyable

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless if interested

MEET THE STEWARTS ◇ ◇

William Holden, Frances Dee, Grant Mitchell, Marjorie Gateson, Anne Revere, Roger Clark, Danny Mummert, Ann Gillis, Margaret Hamilton, Don Beddoe, Mary Gordon, Edward Gargan, Tom Dugan. Screen play by Karen DeWolf based on story by Elizabeth Dunn. Produced by Robert Sparks. Direction by Alfred E. Green. Columbia.

This is an unpretentious little domestic comedy telling of the difficulties encountered when a rich girl marries a poor boy and tries to live within his income. She doesn't succeed at this and tries earning enough money to get them out of the debts she has incurred. This again does not work out too well and they separate. However, all ends well after a rousing fist fight between hubby and a supposed rival. It is well handled in an amusing way without stooping to slapstick.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too "lovey-dovey" for most

Children, 8 to 12 Little interest

❖

MEXICAN SPITFIRE SEES A GHOST ◇ ◇

Lupe Velez, Leon Errol, Charles "Buddy" Rogers, Elizabeth Risdon, Donald MacBride, Minna Gombell, Don Barclay, John Maguire, Lillian Randolph, Mantan Moreland, Harry Tyler, Martin Lamont. Original screen play by Charles E. Roberts and Monte Brice. Directed by Leslie Goodwins. Produced by Cliff Reid. R.K.O.

The usual slapstick, characteristic of this series, depends for laughs on Leon Errol's impersonations of *Uncle Matt* and *Lord Epping*. This time he also portrays a butler. The plot, as usual, centers on *Dennis'* efforts to get a signature on a contract. *Carmelita* and *Uncle Matt* show up as maid and butler respectively, and some of the funny situations are due to their being thus disguised. Lupe Velez is more restrained than usual in this picture, which is to her advantage. A few lines are in questionable taste, but the film is such zany slapstick that enjoyment is entirely a matter of taste anyway.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 Not recommended

❖

MOONTIDE ◇ ◇

Jean Gabin, Ida Lupino, Thomas Mitchell, Claude Rains, Jerome Cowan, Helene Reynolds, Ralph Byrd, William Halligan, Sen Yung, Chester Gan, Arthur Aylesworth, Tully Marshall. Screen play by John O'Hara, adapted from the novel by William Robertson. Direction by Archie Mayo. Produced by Mark Hellinger. 20th Century-Fox.

William Robertson's novel has been exceptionally well adapted for the screen, and the film is so beautifully presented that it will certainly be classed as one of the memorable productions of the year. Much of the credit for its success must go to the intelligent and sympathetic handling of the material by Mr. Mayo and to Jean Gabin's remarkably sensitive and moving delineation of *"Bobo,"* itinerant laborer, who finds a purpose in life through love and the desire for a home. Less capable artists might not have escaped the pitfalls inherent in a drama of the spiritual regeneration of a hard-drinking waterfront worker. "Moontide" tells such a story and makes it absorbingly interesting as well as spiritually satisfying. Important also to the success of the film is the fact that each part is ideally cast. Fascinating camera work also plays no small role in the total effect. The picture is one which should be greatly appreciated by mature audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Serious and mature

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

MY FAVORITE SPY ◇ ◇

Kay Kyser, Ellen Drew, Jane Wyman, Robert Armstrong, Helen Westley, William Demaret, Una O'Conner, Lionel Royce, Moroni Olsen, George Cleveland, Vaughn Glaser, Hobart Cavanaugh, Chester Clute, Teddy Hart, and Kay Kyser's Band. Screen play by Sig Herzig and William Bowers from an original story by M. Coates Webster. Direction by Tay Garnett. Produced by Harold Lloyd. R.K.O.

Harold Lloyd has been really astute in selecting Kay Kyser to succeed him in the type of roles he used to play, the ingenuous, bewildered, bespectacled youth who always finds himself in comical situations beyond his control. This picture even has the chase at the end which used to distinguish Lloyd's "epics," and the result is highly entertaining.

Cast as himself, Kay Kyser is inducted into the army, becomes an F.B.I. agent, gets into all sorts of embarrassing mixups, and goes on a wild hunt for his wife when she is kidnapped by the Fifth Column. It is all quite hilarious and exciting and exceedingly good fun. Kyser's band is not featured but plays several numbers.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Strenuous

❖

SHIP AHOY ◇ ◇

Eleanor Powell, Red Skelton, Bert Lahr, Virginia O'Brien, James Cross, Eddie Hartman, Stuart Crawford, John Emery, Bernard Nedell, Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra. Screen play by Harry Clork based on story by Matt Brooks, Bradford Ropes and Bert Kalmar. Direction by Edward Buzzell. Produced by Jack Cummings. M-G-M.

As a musical, "Ship Ahoy" is light and entertaining. Fun is provided by comedians Red Skelton, Bert Lahr, and Virginia O'Brien; music by Tommy Dorsey; and dancing by Eleanor Powell. As a spy story, it is rather slow. Actually the spy story is secondary, supplying just enough plot to hold the whole together and just enough suspense to give it point. Spies, posing as federal agents, use dancer Powell to help them get a magnetic mine out of the country, but are caught in their efforts. The appeal of this lavish pro-

duction depends on the popularity of the stars, who turn in excellent performances.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Not too highly dramatic, if appealing

❖

SHIPS WITH WINGS ◇ ◇

John Clements, Leslie Banks, Jane Baxter, Basil Sydney, Ann Todd, Edward Chapman, Hugh Williams, Frank Pettingell, Michael Wieding, Michael Rennie, Cecil Parker, John Stuart, Frank Collier. Screen play by Patrick Kirwan, Austin Melford, Diana Morgan and Sergei Nolbandov. Produced by Michael Balcon. Directed by Sergei Nolbandov. Released by United Artists.

This English production glorifies the British naval and air forces, particularly the part played by the carrier, "Ark Royal," in a battle to prevent the seizure of a Greek island by Italian and Nazi invaders. The central character in the story is an English aviator who, having been discharged from the service for a tragic disobedience, becomes a commercial pilot for a Greek company. When war starts in 1939, he is able to redeem himself by an heroic sacrifice. The real star of the picture, however, is the "Ark Royal," which is shown battered but still afloat, with planes catapulting from her deck through an inferno of smoke and flames. In the end she proves to the skeptical command the importance of ships of her kind in naval warfare. The film is immensely exciting and engrossing. The photography is excellent and gives a vivid impression of the terrible dangers encountered by the fliers. The cast is an interesting one.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting

✤

SYNCOPATION ◇ ◇

Adolph Menjou, George Bancroft, Jackie Cooper, Bonita Granville, Todd Duncan, Connie Boswell, Ted North, Frank Jenks, Jessie Grayson, Mona Barrie, Lindy Wade, Peggy McIntyre. Screen play by Philip Yordan and Frank Cavett from an original story, "The Band Played On," by Valentine Davies. All-American Dance Band with Charlie Barnet, Jack Jenny, Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, Harry James, Alvino Rey, Joe Venuti, Hall Johnson Choir. Produced and directed by William Dieterle. R.K.O.

As in "Blues in the Night," "Syncopation" traces the development of jazz, this picture going way back to the depths of Africa to get its rhythm. Low-down rhythm and plenty of brass constitute the biggest asset of the production, for the story is disjointed, forced and quite overwhelmed with its own importance. It concerns *Kit Latimer,* of New Orleans, who is infected with the rhythm of New Orleans negro music. She moves to Chicago where she meets *Johnny,* a young man with a trumpet. Her boyhood sweetheart is killed in World War I, while *Johnny* is kept home playing in the military band. After the war *Johnny* and *Kit* marry, and *Johnny* deserts his own kind of music in search of success with a formal orchestra. Later he realizes his mistake and gets his old band together and finally sells his music to the public.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 If interested in swing music

Children, 8 to 12 Of little interest

✤

TAKE A LETTER, DARLING ◇ ◇

Rosalind Russell, Fred MacMurray, Constance Moore, Macdonald Carey, Robert Benchley, Cecil Kellaway, Charles S, Arnt. Screen play by Claude Binyon from story by George Beck. Direction by Mitchell Leisen. Paramount.

Exceptionally clever dialogue, an amusing plot, and a cast adept in sophisticated comedy should make this film a box office success. It is frothy, entertaining nonsense about a woman in the advertising business who employs male secretaries to entertain the wives of her customers while she uses her wiles to get contracts from the men. After she finally hires a handsome artist to act as secretary, nobody in the audience should be surprised to see them starting to Mexico in a trailer, presumably to be married.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. Very sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12 No

✤

TARSAN'S NEW YORK ADVENTURES ◇

Johnny Weissmuller, Maureen O'Sullivan, Johnny Sheffield, Charles Bickford, Virginia Grey, Chill Wills, Paul Kelly, Cy. Kendall, and Cheeta. Direction by Richard Thorpe. M-G-M.

Tarzan's peaceful jungle home is again disturbed by three men from civilization who are fasincated by *Boy's* natural ability with wild animals and who kidnap him, thus forcing his frantic parents to follow and locate him in New York. *Boy* is found in a circus, and *Tarzan, Cheeta,* and the circus elephants work together for his freedom.

To those who find *Tarzan's* adventures amusing, this chapter will prove very entertaining. The opening scenes in the jungle give a remarkable impression of wild life; the New York circus is a show in itself; and the wild chase following the sound of *Tarzan's* call, when pandemonium breaks loose in the tent and the circus men try to hide *Boy,* is an exciting episode. *Tarzan* in tailored clothes swinging from roof to roof of skyscrapers, attended by the faithful, resourceful *Cheeta,* provides much merriment,

and while there are exciting scenes with cruel beasts and equally cruel men, the effect is one of distinct improbability, of fantastic adventure which children and their parents will accept in the spirit in which it is offered.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining and amusing

Children, 8 to 12 Exciting in places, plenty of action; good picture of animal life

✦

THIS ABOVE ALL ◇ ◇

Tyrone Power, Joan Fontaine, Thomas Mitchel, Henry Stephenson, Nigel Bruce, Gladys Cooper, Philip Merivale, Sara Allgood, Alexander Knox, Queenie Leonard, Melville Cooper, Jill Esmond, Holmes Herbert, Denis Green, Arthur Shields, Dennis Hoey, Thomas Louden. Screen play by R. C. Sherriff based on novel by Eric Knight. Director of photography Arthur Miller, A.S.C. Music by Alfred Newman. Direction by Anatole Litvak. Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck. 20th Century-Fox.

For obvious reasons, Eric Knight's best seller is greatly changed in details for its screening, and the film is much less unconventional than the novel, but its theme remains unchanged. It is concerned with the state of mind of an English soldier who questions why he should return from sick leave to fight for an England which has given him only poverty and bitterness. Various influences are brought to bear: a serious romance with a high class girl who is distressed by his attitude, the pleading of a friend that desertion will mean personal ruin; and finally a chance meeting with a clergyman who gives him his first clue to the answer. The picture might be considered tragedy since it ends in the death of the hero, but it is not futile, for it provides an answer to his dilemma and is inspirational in effect. It is very well done. The sets give a real impression of England. The sea coast with its barricades against invasion, the old inns, the pubs, the tradition and age lend a feeling of something too precious to be smashed by any Hun. The bombing of London and the final bombing of the hospital is terrible in its realism.

The acting throughout is exceedingly good, particularly that of Joan Fontaine, who gives a stirring and beautiful performance which should bring her new honors.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended too mature in its sophistication

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature and no interest

TORTILLA FLAT ◇ ◇

Spencer Tracy, Heddy Lamarr, John Garfield, Akim Tamiroff, John Qualen, Frank Morgan, Allen Jenkins, Sheldon Leonard, Connie Gilchrist, Henry O'Neill, Donald Meek, Mercedes Ruffino, Nina Campana, Arthur Wells, Harry Burns. Screen play by John Lee Mahin and Benjamin Glazier based on book by John Steinbeck. Direction by Victor Fleming. Produced by Sam Zimalist. M-G-M.

It is a very difficult thing to transfer gentle, childlike, unmoral people to the screen and retain the characteristics which have endeared them to readers of the printed page, but "Metro" has done an excellent job with the ironical humor of Steinbeck's "Tortilla Flat." It is a quaint chronicle of the paisanos —that mixture of Spanish, Indian, Mexican and assorted Caucasian bloods, who live in the hills above Monterey—with no property to be stolen, no houses in which to live, no material demands except for a bit of food and a bottle of wine, and a little pleasure, provided no obligations are entailed thereby.

Danny is one of these people. He is bequeathed two houses by his grandfather, and the undermining influence of property ownership and the obligation of respectability attack the delicate structure of his relationship to his friends and to society. His friends move in upon him and strive to protect his pagan freedom, but they are bested by the spiritual purity of an old man and by the regenerating influence of a girl with whom *Danny* falls in love. *Pilon,* the shrewd and domineering leader of the group is moved to pay his obligations to society through *Danny,* and the little band moves out of his life. *Danny* is lost to them, not by death as in the book, but by his marriage and consequent conformity to conventionality and by the obligations which come to him as a family man.

The charm and humor of these amazing, irresponsible people have been captured in a most unusual manner. John Garfield has never appeared to better advantage than as *Danny.* Akim Tamiroff, as the dumb, childlike *Pablo,* is perfect. Frank Morgan gives a superb performance in the role of *The Pirate,* the gentle "innocent" surrounded by his five devoted dogs, who is so touched by the friendship offered by the group of paisanos that he turns over his savings to their care. His spiritual purity and trusting devotion makes their plan to rob him impossible and the scene where his gold candlestick is dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi is deeply moving. Spencer Tracy's *Pilon* is also excellent. If he seems less the personification of the childlike character of the book, it is perhaps because, although *Pilon* is the only shrewd rascal in the group. Spencer Tracy gives the

impression of intelligence behind the chicanery rather than artless cunning. Hedy Lamarr is very well cast in a role differing in character from the novel, but Connie Gilchrist, Mercedes Ruffino and Nina Campana are so natural that they are outstanding in minor roles. Real and beautiful backgrounds of the harbor and the shoreline of the peninsula are mixed with backdrops, but to audiences unfamiliar with the locale the substitution will probably not be noticeable. It is a delightful picture. Those who think that "Tortilla Flat" is Steinbeck's masterpiece should find rare satisfaction in the production, and most audiences will find it novel, interesting and entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature but entertaining — **Children, 8 to 12** No objection

❖

TWIN BEDS ◇ ◇

George Brent, Joan Bennett, Mischa Auer, Una Merkel, Ernest Truex, Glenda Farrell, Margaret Hamilton, Charles Coleman, Charles Arnt. Direction by Tim Whelan. United Artists.

This old bedroom farce has been refurbished and brought up to date with timely embellishments, but it turns out to be hardly worth the effort. It is mostly about a bride's franctic efforts to get rid of two men who have wandered into her apartment in her husband's absence. The humor narrowly escapes vulgarity, and though individual performances are excellent and there are some laughs, the whole effect is repetitious and a bit dull.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

WHISPERING GHOSTS ◇ ◇

Milton Berle, Brenda Joyce, John Shelton, John Carradine, Willie Best, Abner Biberman, Edmund MacDonald, Arthur Kohl, Milton Parsons, Rene Riano, Charles Halton, Harry Hayden. Screen play by Lou Breslow from original story by Philip MacDonald. Direction by Alfred Werker. Sol. M. Wurtzel, produced. 20th Century-Fox.

This is a mystery comedy with less emphasis placed on who-dun-it than on wisecracks by a brash radio broadcaster of crime solutions and the comic antics of his terrified colored valet. Most of the action takes place on the beached and rotting hull of a deserted sailing vessel, which seems always to be shrouded in heavy fog or battered by rain and wind. The grandniece of a murdered sea captain inherits the old boat. The radio broadcaster, in reconstructing unsolved crimes, takes up this case and promises to give the solution on his next broadcast. Thus he becomes involved in the investigation which is taken up by an odd assortment of people who believe that the hull hides a fortune in diamonds and who roam like spooks over the ship. It is all very complicated but amusing in its way. Rolling eyes in stuffed fish, grasping hands, and Willie Best's sure-fire helpless terror make the action absurd rather than realistic.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable — **Children, 8 to 12** No

★ ★ ★

SHORT SUBJECTS

BOMBER ◇ ◇

A Defense Report on Films produced by the Office for Emergency Management.

This piceure shows how the many and complicated parts are being speedily and efficiently assembled into capable bombers in a typical airplane factory. It inspires both confidence and patriotism and holds interest for everyone. Carl Sandberg makes the commentary with fire and feeling.

❖

FURTHER PROPHECIES OF NOSTRADAMUS ◇ ◇

M-G-M Miniature.

Sketching a brief history of Nostradamus, the picture goes on to a very heartening interpretation of the highly symbolic verses of this prophet, picturing the Allies as conclusively defeating the Axis and bringing in a long period of peace. Interesting and well-handled, it evades the debatable issue of credibility with a verbal shrug.

❖

THE WOMAN IN THE HOUSE ◇ ◇

Passing Parade Series. M-G-M.

This modern and timely fable relates the case history of a woman whose overwhelming fear of people is overcome when she helps children during an air raid. The moral, effectively made, points out that working and helping others is a natural antidote for fear, John Nesbitt narrates dramatically.

❖

WOMEN IN DEFENSE ◇ ◇

A government short subject.

This film reports pictorially the various ways in which women are helping in the war effort—from studying home nutrition to working in laboratories and war industry factories. The familiar voice of Katherine Hepburn gives the commentary written by Mrs. Roosevelt. This short picture is informative and of general interest.

INDEX . . . JANUARY THROUGH JUNE, 1942

A

Adventures of Martin Eden, The....March
All through the Night....February
Always in My Heart....April
Among the Living....January

B

Babes On Broadway....January
Bahama Passage....February
Ball of Fire....January
Bambi....June
Bashful Bachelor, The....April
Bedtime Story....January
Beyond the Blue Horizon....June
Black Dragons....April
Blue, White and Perfect....February
Born to Sing....March
Broadway....May
Bugle Sounds, The....February
Butch Minds the Baby....April

C

Captains of the Clouds....March
Castle in the Desert....March
Corpse Vanishes, The....May
Corsican Brothers, The....January
Courtship of Andy Hardy, The....April

D

Dangerously They Live....March
Design for Scandal....February
Dr. Broadway....June
Dr. Kildare's Victory....February
Down Texas Way....June

F

Falcon Takes Over, The....June
Fingers at the Window....June
Fleet's In, The....April
Fly By Night....April
Four Jacks and a Jill....February
Frisco Lil....April

G

Gentleman at Heart, A....February
Gentlemen After Dark....April
Ghost of Frankenstein, The....April
Gold Rush, The....April
Great Man's Lady, The....May
Gyandev....March

H

Hellzapoppin'....January
Henry and Dizzy....May

I

I Married an Angel....June
In This Our Life....May
Invaders, The....March

J

Joan of Paris....March
Joe Smith, American....February
Johnny Eager....February
Juke Girl....June
Jungle Book, The....April

K

Kathleen....January
Kid Glove Killer....April
Kings Row....April
Klondike Fury....April

L

Lady For a Night....January
Lady Gangster....June
Lady Has Plans, The....March
Lady Is Willing, The....March
Larceny, Inc....May
Louisiana Purchase....January

M

Mad Martindales, The....May
Magnificent Dope, The....June
Maisie Gets Her Man....June
Male Animal, The....April
Man From Headquarters....February
Man Who Came to Dinner, The....February
Man Who Wouldn't Die, The....May
Mayor of 44th Street, The....May
Meet the Stewarts....June
Mexican Spitfire at Sea....April
Mexican Spitfire Sees a Ghost....June
Mr. and Mrs. North....February
Mr. Bug Goes to Town....March
Mr. District Attorney....January
"Mister V"....March
Mokey....April
Moontide....June
My Favorite Blonde....May
My Favorite Spy....June
My Gal Sal....May
Mystery of Marie Roget, The....May

N

Nazi Agent (See Salute to Courage)....February
No Hands on the Clock....March

O

On the Sunny Side....March

P

Paris Calling....January
Perfect Snob, The....January
Playmates....January

R

Reap the Wild Wind....April
Remarkable Andrew, The....March
Remarkable Mr. Kipps, The....April
Remember the Day....January
Ride 'Em, Cowboy....April
Right to the Heart....February
Rings on Her Fingers....April
Rio Rita....May
Road Agent....January
Road to Happiness, The....January
Roxie Hart....March

S

Saboteur....May
Salute to Courage....February
Scattergood Rides High....April
Sealed Lips....January
Secret Agent of Japan....April
Shanghai Gesture....January
Ship Ahoy....June
Ships With Wings....June
Snuffy Smith, Yardbird....February
Son of Fury....February
Song of the Islands....March
Spoilers, The....May
Steel Against the Sky....January
Sullivan's Travels....March
Sunday Punch....May
Sundown Jim....May
Syncopation....June

T

Take a Letter, Darling....June
Tarzan's New York Adventures....June
Tarzan's Secret Treasure....January
They Died with Their Boots On....January
This Above All....June
This Gun for Hire....May
This Time for Keeps....April
This Was Paris....May
Three Girls About Town....January
To Be or Not To Be....April
Tortilla Flat....June
To the Shores of Tripoli....April
True to the Army....May

Twin Beds ..... June
Two-Faced Woman ..... January
Two Yanks in Trinidad ..... April
Tuttles of Tahiti, The ..... April

V

Valley of the Sun ..... February
Vanishing Virginian, The ..... January

W

We Were Dancing ..... March
Week-End for Three ..... January
What's Cookin' ..... April
Whispering Ghosts ..... June
Who Is Hope Schuyler? ..... April
Wife Takes a Flyer, The ..... May
Wild Bill Hickok Rides ..... March
Wolf Man, The ..... January
Woman of the Year ..... February

Y

Yank on the Burma Road, A ..... March
Young America ..... February

SHORT SUBJECTS

Argentine Question (March of Time) ..... April
Bomber ..... June
California Junior Symphony, The ..... March
Changed Identity ..... January
Don Cossack Chorus ..... May
Further Prophecies of Nostradamus ..... June
Greenie, The ..... March
New Spirit, The ..... March
Night Before Christmas, The ..... January
Soldiers in White ..... February
Spanish Fiesta ..... May
We Do It Because ..... March
What About Daddy ..... April
Woman in the House, The ..... June
Women in Defense ..... June

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FEATURE FILMS

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The Affairs of Martha
A-Haunting We Will Go
Are Husbands Necessary?
The Big Shot
Calling Dr. Gillespie
Crossroads
Eagle Squadron
Footlight Serenade
Flight Lieutenant
Friendly Enemies
The Gay Sisters
Her Cardboard Lover
Holiday Inn
I Live On Danger
It Happened in Flatbush
Jackass Mail
Lady In a Jam
The Loves of Edgar Allan Poe
The Magnificent Ambersons
Miss Annie Rooney
Mrs. Miniver
Pacific Rendezvous
The Postman Didn't Ring
Sweater Girl
Ten Gentlemen From West Point
They All Kissed The Bride
Through Different Eyes
Tombstone
United We Stand
Wings For The Eagle
Yankee Doodle Dandy

SHORT SUBJECTS

Puss'n Toots
Winning Your Wings

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NOTICE

Because of the pressure of war-time conditions, "MOTION PICTURE REVIEWS" will be published every two months instead of monthly, beginning in September. Each issue will be a double number, however, containing the same number of reviews as though printed every four weeks. New booking schedules have made many films available for reviewing farther in advance of their release dates than they used to be, so we hope that this necessary curtailment of service will not be too great an inconvenience to our subscribers.

We believe that it is especially important in these upsetting times to choose family film entertainment wisely, and we shall therefore make every effort to continue to furnish you with reliable information. THE EDITORS.

FEATURE FILMS

THE AFFAIRS OF MARTHA ◇ ◇

Marsha Hunt, Richard Carlson, Marjorie Main, Virginia Weidler, Spring Byington, Allyn Joslyn, Frances Drake. Barry Nelson, Melville Cooper, Inez Cooper, Sara Haden, Margaret Hamilton, Ernest Truex, Cecil Cunningham, William B. Davidson, Aubrey Mather, Grady Sutton. Original story and screen play by Isobel Lennart and Lee Gold. Direction by Jules Dassin. Produced by Irving Starr. M-G-M.

This is an unusually entertaining little romantic comedy. Through deft direction and a carefully selected cast, it achieves a good deal more "class" than the average. Marsha Hunt is cast as *Martha,* a dainty, sweet mannered second maid in a big Long Island home. The community where her employers live is agog over a newspaper article stating that a book is about to be published, the author of which is a maid in the home of one of the families in this suburb. The various families are pictured, and their reactions to this horrifying idea are amusingly shown. It develops, of course, that *Martha* has written the book and that she turns out to be something other than just a serving maid. A Cinderella theme is generally appealing, and in this picture it has the additional advantage of exceptionally clever handling in writing, acting, and directing. The introductory shots and the musical score deserve a blue ribbon.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless and possibly enjoyable

A-HAUNTING WE WILL GO ◇ ◇

Laurel and Hardy, Dante, Sheila Ryan, John Shelton, Don Costello, Elisha Cook, Jr., Edward Gargan, Addison Richards, George Lynn, James Bush, Lou Lubin, Robert Emmett Keane. Directed by Alfred Werker. 20th Century-Fox.

"A Haunting We Will Go" is not a ghost story ,but is Laurel and Hardy at their best and funniest. There is the usual slapstick but it is not overdone, and Dante, the magician, is an excellent addition. The plot is sufficiently plausible to hold adult interest, and children will love the entire picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

❖

ARE HUSBANDS NECESSARY? ◇ ◇

Ray Milland, Betty Field, Patricia Morison, Eugene Pallette, Charles Dingle, Leif Erickson, Elisabeth Risdon, Richard Haydn, Kathleen Lockhart, Phillip Terry, Cecil Kellaway, Anne Revere. From the book "Mr. and Mrs. Cugat," by Isabel Scott Rorick. Direction by Norman Taurog. Paramount.

"Mr. and Mrs. Cugat," the book from which this film was adapted, was a series of witty sketches which pictured, or at least suggested, any number of people one might know. It had a brand of light sophistication and good natured nonsense which was evidently difficult to capture in the more realistic medium of the screen, for the picture turns out to be just another screwball domestic comedy, well played and well directed and entertaining, but just missing the unusual charm of the original.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Possibly entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

❖

THE BIG SHOT ◇ ◇

Humphrey Bogart, Irene Manning, Richard Travis, Susan Peters, Stanley Ridges, Minor Watson. Direction by Lewis Seiler. Warner Bros.

While *Duke Berne,* a hard and calculating criminal, lies dying, the events of his life pass through his mind. They are unsavory episodes: robbery, murder, and an affair with his lawyer's wife. This last offense is his undoing, for the lawyer turns stool pigeon and when *Duke* follows his one decent impulse, he and the woman are shot. Technically, the plot adheres to the Hays edict that crime must be shown not to pay, but since sympathy is thrown to the personable and adept actor, Humphrey Bogart, who plays the part of the criminal, there is little to be said in favor of the ethics of the film. It is well-acted, exciting melodrama though definitely in the "gangster film" category.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor **Children, 8 to 12** No

CALLING DR. GILLESPIE ◇ ◇

Lionel Barrymore, Philip Dorn, Donna Reed, Phil Brown, Nat Pendelton, Alma Kruger, Mary Nash, Walter Kingsford, Nell Craig, Ruth Tobey, Jonathan Hale, Charles Dingle. Screen play by Willis Goldbeck and Harry Ruskin from original story by Kubec Glasmon. Based on characters created by Max Brand. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

The "Dr. Kildare" stories have come to an end with Lew Ayres' departure into the Army Medical Corps, and now *Dr. Gillespie* has a new protege, *John Gerniede,* who is off to a bad start in a morbid episode about a patient with dementia praecox which manifests itself in homicidal tendencies. The fact that the patient is engaged to a fresh, young girl in boarding school makes it even more terrifying. Although the case chosen for this film is treated with enough veracity to meet requirements, the rules of hospital procedure are burlesqued for the purpose of humor as usually happens in this series. It now remains to be seen if Lionel Barrymore without the assistance of Lew Ayres and Laraine Day can maintain the popularity of this series.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

CROSSROADS ◇ ◇

William Powell, Hedy Lamarr, Claire Trevor, Basil Rathbone, Margaret Wycherly, Felix Bressart, Reginald Owen, Sig Rumann, H. B. Warner, Philip Merivale, Vladimar Sokoloff, Guy Bates Post. Original story by John Kafka and Howard Emmett Rogers. Screen play by Guy Trosper. Direction by Jack Conway. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

William Powell takes the part of a French diplomat, victim of amnesia as a result of a railroad accident. Three blackmailers, knowing of his affliction, try to extort large sums of money from him, and these scoundrels are bold enough to confront him in the French courts. The plot is elaborated in a rather novel way, brimful of suspense. William Powell and Basil Rathbone are exceptionally good in their parts, although the whole cast is well chosen, and the production is marked by clever dialogue and smooth direction.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature and involved

❖

EAGLE SQUADRON ◇ ◇

Robert Stack, Diana Barrymore, John Loder, Jon Hall, Nigel Bruce, Leif Erickson, Evelyn Ankers, Edgar Barrier, Tom Stevenson, Ben Erway. Direction by Arthur Lubin. Wagner-Universal.

An impressive introduction by Quentin Reynolds dedicates the film to those American fliers, members of the Eagle Squadron of the R.A.F. who have fought and died in the service. Documentary shots of aerial warfare in England, showing extraordinary

views of flight formations and maneuvers and panoramas of bombed and burned London contrasting with the idyllic countryside, make this a film of unusual interest. The story is simple but sufficient, and through it runs a brief for Anglo-American understanding. A young American flyer is bewildered at the undemonstrative attitude of the British as they carry on in the face of death and destruction. As he matures through experience he realizes that their deepest and tenderest feelings are subordinated to the will to win the war. The film is well cast. Diana Barrymore is good as the young English girl, and all the men give excellent performances. "Eagle Squadron" gives a vivid impression of England as it is to-day. There is much of the horror of war, but rising above it are the thrill of achievement and the determination to fight through to success.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Inspiring
Children, 8 to 12 Too tense and too long

❖

FOOTLIGHT SERENADE ◇ ◇

John Payne, Betty Grable, Victor Mature, Jane Wyman, James Gleason, Phil Silvers, Cobina Wright, Jr., June Lang, Frank Orth, Manton Moreland, Irving Bacon, Billy Newell. Directed by Gregory Ratoff. 20th Century-Fox.

The honors for "Footlight Serenade" go to Victor Mature who turns in a very convincing portrait of a cock-sure, egotistical prizefighter, with irresistible appeal for the ladies. A musical comedy is built around him, thus combining music and dancing with a more or less realistic fight. The story is rather thin, but an excellent cast combined with good dancing and music make this into very acceptable entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good
Children, 8 to 12 No interest

❖

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT ◇ ◇

Pat O'Brien, Glenn Ford, Evelyn Keyes, Jonathan Hale, Minor Watson, Frank Puglia, Edward Pawley, Gregory Gay, Clancy Cooper, Trevor Bardette, Marcel Dalio, John Gallaudet. Direction by Sidney Salkow. Columbia Pictures Corp.

It is unusual these days to find an aviation picture which is not based on war. Much of the action takes place in Dutch Guiana, where an American aviator makes a precarious living far from the son he has disgraced when, while intoxicated, he crashed and killed his co-pilot. Pat O'Brien gives a fine performance as the father, *Sam Doyle*. The relationship between father and son presents a poignant problem and the contrast in the characters of the two men is strongly portrayed, but because of the number of coincidences the audience is expected to accept, and because several of the minor roles are poorly cast, the film fails to be deeply convincing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting
Children, 8 to 12 Too mature

❖

FRIENDLY ENEMIES ◇ ◇

Charles Winninger, Charlie Ruggles, James Craig, Nancy Kelly, Otto Kruger, Ilka Gruning, Greta Meyer, Addison Richards, Charles Lane, John Piffle, Ruth Holly. Screen play by Adelaide Heilbron from the comedy drama by Samuel Shipman and Aaron Hoffman. Direction by Allan Dwan. Edward Small-United Artists.

Though "Friendly Enemies" is offered as comedy, the underlying theme is serious: the difficult position of German-Americans in the first World War. Unfortunately, the play (first made popular by David Warfield), is dated. In those days one could forgive sentimental old Germans for a belief in the regime under which they were born, but times have changed. With the exception of James Craig, who fails to put much warmth into his effort, acting is good, and the settings, featuring a huge, elaborate home of the period, are well done.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes, but action is slow
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE GAY SISTERS ◇ ◇

Barbara Stanwyck, George Brent, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Donald Crisp, Gig Young, Nancy Coleman, Gene Lockhart, Larry Sims, Donald Woods, Grant Mitchell, William T. Orr, Anne Revere. Screen play by Lenore Coffee, based on the novel by Stephen Longstreet. Direction by Irving Rapper. Warner Bros.

Three sisters, the last of the line of erratic and self-indulgent *Gaylords,* are heiresses of a large estate, chiefly in New York properties. Due to a discrepancy in wills, a court battle over the inheritance wages for a matter of twenty years. It is not a good film for young people, revealing as it does unpleasant family relationships and a romantic entanglement which can offer no promise of constructive happiness. Several of the roles are vivid, and a noteworthy score by Max Steiner and photography by Sol Polito lend a depth and interest to the production which it probably does not merit on other counts.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

❖

HER CARDBOARD LOVER ◇ ◇

Norma Shearer, Robert Taylor, George Sanders, Frank McHugh, Elizabeth Patterson, Donald Meek, Chill Wills, Jill Esmond. Screen play by Jacques Deval and John Collier, Anthony Veiller and William H. Wright. Based upon a play by Jacques Deval. Direction by George Cukor. M-G-M.

For some reason this revival of a successful stage play does not click on the screen.

Although it has a popular cast, smart up-to-date settings, and a farcical plot that would not necessarily become dated, it nevertheless seems stilted and outmoded.

A young woman hires a man to pretend to be her fiance and thus to keep her from yielding to the attractions of an undesirable suitor. The situation develops much as might be anticipated.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

HOLIDAY INN ◇ ◇

Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Marjorie Reynolds, Virginia Dale, Walter Abel, Louise Beavers, Irving Bacon, Marek Windheim, James Bell, John Gallaudet, Shelby Bacon, Joan Arnold. Directed by Mark Sandrich. Paramount.

Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire teamed in a picture should be enough to assure its popularity, and since "Holiday Inn" is cleverly constructed to show them both to advantage, it turns out to be particularly good entertainment. According to the film, Bing Crosby opens an inn on holidays only, and for each of the fifteen occasions puts on a show appropriate for that particular day. This idea gives variety to the settings and types of entertainment. The production is lavish and tuneful, the dances are up to Astaire's high standard, and the romantic angle of the plot is nicely taken care of by attractive Marjorie Reynolds.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent **Children, 8 to 12** Excellent

❖

I LIVE ON DANGER ◇ ◇

Chester Morris, Jean Parker, Elizabeth Risdon, Edward Norris, Dick Purcell, Roger Pryor, Douglas Fowley, Ralph Sanford, Edwin Maxwell, Patsy Nash, Joe Cunningham, Bernadene Hayes. Directed by Sam White. Paramount.

A fast moving, somewhat tawdry melodrama shows *Jeff Morrell* (Chester Morris) as a special events broadcaster, an exploiter of human suffering, one who is on the spot when a catastrophe occurs to interview the victims so that he can relate the lurid details. Because he falls in love with a girl he has a change of heart, but one doubts if the conversion will last. The plot is complicated and rather confusing, and the characters are not developed clearly enough to win deep sympathy. Some of the acting is good. Jean Parker gives a fine, restrained performance. Little Patsy Nash, a three-year-old, is outstanding in a bit role, a child searching for her parents among the survivors of a shipwreck.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

IT HAPPENED IN FLATBUSH ◇ ◇

Lloyd Nolan, Carole Landis, Sara Allgood, Wm. Frawley, Joseph Allen, Jr., Robert Armstrong, Jane Darwell, George Holmes, Scotty Beckett, Mary Gordon. Original screen play by Harold Buchman and Lee Loeb. Direction by Ray McCarey. Produced by Walter Morosco. 20th Century-Fox.

Few sport films contain as much spontaneous entertainment as this picture of the great American game of baseball. It should delight sport fans from the professional to the small boy of the sand lot or the most casual occupant of the bleachers. Along with the fast moving, exciting story there is a revelation of the psychology of baseball adherents: the near-hysteria of ordinary citizens, the power of the press on public opinion and the trigger tension of the players themselves. The film is good Americana. The plot concerns the come-back of a former baseball player who has once lost the pennant for Brooklyn and who is recalled by the owner to manage the ball club. Given a second chance, he fights through to success, gaining the championship for his team.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Good, especially for boys

❖

JACKASS MAIL ◇ ◇

Wallace Beery, Marjorie Main, J. Carrol Naish, Darryl Hickman, William Haade, Dick Curtis, Hobart Cavanaugh, Joe Yule, Louis Mason, Joe Whitehead. Based on a story by C. Gardner Sullivan. Screen play by Lawrence Hazard. Direction by Norman Z. McLeod. M-G.M.

Admirers of Wallace Beery will enjoy him in another of his rough but lovable characters. Marjorie Main teams with him most satisfactorily in this Western comedy, packed with wild rides, forays of bandits and assorted gun battles. The production is not so smooth as it might be, since sometimes serious passages are closely interwoven with farce, but the picture is entertaining in its class. *Just Baggott,* driving the mules that carry the mail, comes into a little California town in 1851. *Clementine,* the owner of the mail line, falls in love with *Just* but refuses to marry him until he has proved to be more than a drunken roustabout. *Baggott* becomes guardian of a boy whose father he has inadvertently killed, and through the influence of this boy and *Clementine,* respectability catches up with him.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Confusing values

❖

LADY IN A JAM ◇ ◇

Irene Dunne, Patric Knowles, Ralph Bellamy, Eugene Pallette, Queenie Vassar, Jane Garland, Samuel S. Hinds. Screen play by Eugene Thackrey, Frank Cockrell, Otho Lovering. Direction by Gregory La Cava. Universal.

In this modern version of a "Taming of

the Shrew" plot, a good comedy theme has gone haywire. The opening scenes promise well. A nit-wit heiress has squandered her inheritance, and her guardian, believing that a psychiatrist might bring her to her senses, consults a young doctor who makes her acquaintance incognito and attempts to cure her by methods which seem almost as crazy as the lady's behavior. In fact, most of the characters and situations are so completely unreal that what happens holds little interest. Some of Irene Dunne's fans may like her in this sort of inane fluff, but she is certainly more charming in a better role.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Innocuous and possibly entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Probably no interest

❖

THE LOVES OF EDGAR ALLAN POE ◇

Linda Darnell, John Shepperd, Virginia Gilmore, Jane Darwell, Mary Howard, Frank Conroy, Henry Morgan, Walter Kingsford, Morris Ankrum, Skippy Wanders, Freddie Mercer, Erville Alderson. Screen play by Samuel Hoffenstein and Tom Reed. Direction by Harry Lachman. 20th Century-Fox.

Many audiences will enjoy this idealized biographical portrait which emphasizes Poe's devotion to his foster mother and his great love for the young cousin whom he married. It is charmingly conceived and well presented and is sufficiently accurate in giving chronologically some of the important events of Poe's life, but it ought not to be regarded as a complete analysis of his character or of the forces which were responsible for the development of his genius. Pictorially it is often beautiful, and it has moments of inspirational quality.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature

❖

THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS ◇ ◇

Joseph Cotten, Dolores Costello, Anne Baxter, Tim Holt, Agnes Moorehead, Ray Collins, Erskine Sanford, Richard Bennett, Don Dillaway. Screen play by Orson Welles from the novel by Booth Tarkington. Direction by Orson Welles. Produced by Orson Welles. R.K.O.

Since American life in the late 1800's was not actually so quaint and so trivial as it has recently been pictured on the screen, it is gratifying to find that Booth Tarkington's interesting novel of that period has been made into an interesting and authentic picture. Orson Welles' production closely follows the original, and is an absorbing, though somewhat too coldly objective study of the lives and fortunes of the "magnificent" *Amberson* family as they were affected by the changing economic structure of American life. The settings, costumes, and customs of the time are especially well depicted to give the atmosphere of the period. It is not a happy picture, dealing as it does with the failing fortune and gradual degeneration of a proud family; with the weakening of a young man through a mother's indulgence; with bickering and frustration. It is, however, an artistic and worthwhile dramatization of the book.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MISS ANNIE ROONEY ◇ ◇

Shirley Temple, Wm. Gargan, Guy Kibbee, Dickie Moore, Peggy Ryan, Roland de Pree, Gloria Holden, Jonathan Hale, Mary Field, George Lloyd, Jan Buckingham, Selmer Jackson. Original screen play by Grant Whytock. Direction by Edwin L. Marin. Edward Small-United Artists.

Although Shirley Temple's charm shows no diminution as she grows older to bring out her best qualities, she needs a much better story and more subtle direction than one finds in "Miss Annie Rooney." Here is the old Cinderella motive elaborated into a tale about a lass from the wrong side of the tracks who acquires and merits the affection of the adolescent son of a wealthy family, and through this connection puts her father's formula for synthetic rubber on the market. Frequently the action is too slow and ponderous for a picture about young people, and while the script is supposed to satirize the modern slang of the 'teen age, it belongs so patently to the jitterbug group that it sounds false and even bewildering to the average person, young or old. The jitterbug dancing demonstrated by Shirley is amusing without being vulgar or extreme. Dickie Moore is delightful in his part, and the adult actors, especially Guy Kibbee and William Gargan, are very good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Yes, if it holds interest

❖

MRS. MINIVER ◇ ◇

Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon, Teresa Wright, Dame Mary Whitty, Reginald Owen, Henry Travers, Richard Ney, Tom Conway, Henry Wilcoxon, Christopher Severn, Brenda Forbes, Clare Sandars, Marie De Becher, Helmut Dantine, John Abbott, Connie Leon, Rhys Williams, St. Luke Choristers. From the book by Jan Struther. Directed by William Wyler. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

"Mrs. Miniver" is a beautiful and inspiring picture of an English family's adjustment to war-time living. Its subject matter is universally appealing, and its production values are exceptional. To meet the *Minivers* on the screen and to share some of their experiences is to gain a deeper understanding of what war would mean to the families of America if it should come to American soil. The film does not rely on action or on an exciting plot for interest; its strength lies in its adherence to the normality of every-

day events against a background of war that is suggested rather than shown. Both humor and tragedy play a part but neither steals the limelight. Director Wyler, the fine cast, and the writer have given their best to make a picture for which the public should be grateful.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Outstandingly good

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

PACIFIC RENDEZVOUS ◇ ◇

Lee Bowman, Jean Rogers, Mona Maris, Carl Esmond, Paul Cavanagh, Russell Hicks, Arthur Shields, William Post, Jr., William Tannen, Addison Richards, Frederic Worlock, Curt Bois. Screen play by Harry Kurnitz, P. J. Wolfson and George Oppenheimer from a book by Herbert O. Yardley. Directed by George Sidney. M-G-M.

"Pacific Rendezvous" is an entertaining melodrama using Naval Intelligence Headquarters in Washington as a background. Although anxious for active duty, *Lt. Bill Gordon* (Bill Bowman) is detained in Washington to give expert assistance in breaking an important Axis code. This leads to an exciting spy chase which is hindered more than aided by impetuous *Elaine Carter* (Jean Rogers). The film is well cast and lightened by comedy touches. It provides mild enjoyment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Innocuous

❖

THE POSTMAN DIDN'T RING ◇ ◇

Richard Travis, Brenda Joyce, Spencer Charters, Stanley Andrews, William Bakewell, Emma Dunn, Joseph Cawthorne, Oscar O'Shea, Erville Alderson, Jeff Corey, Frank M. Thomas, Will Wright, Betty Jean Hainey, Ethel Griffies, Henry Roquemore, Mary Servoss. Screen play by Mortimer Braus. Original story by Mortimer Braus and Leon Ware. Direction by Harold Schuster. Produced by Ralph Dietrich. 20th Century-Fox.

This title suggests all sorts of interesting possibilities few of which are realized in the film. The story opens with the finding of a mail bag, stolen in 1889, which has been hidden in the attic of an old New England house. The delivery of its contents to various descendants of the original addressees offers an opportunity for unique story development. But when the important letter in the plot is delivered, it brings up the old hokum story about poor hard working farmers and a family of swindlers who own the local bank. A romantic angle is supplied by a girl stamp collector who falls in love with the young farmer. The picture is nicely acted and pleasantly entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

SWEATER GIRL ◇ ◇

Eddie Bracken, June Priesser, Phillip Terry, Nils Asther, Frieda Inescort, Betty Jane Rhodes, Kenneth Howell, Johnnie Johnston, William Henry, Ella Neal, Minerva Urecal, Charles D. Brown. Screen play by Eve Greene, based on a story by Beulah Marie Dix and Bertram Willhauser.

The title and the opening scenes lead the audience to anticipate a musical comedy. The picture is actually a particularly unpleasant type of murder mystery with college settings, and while the murder plot is original and well worked out, the admixture of sophomoric clowning arouses incredulity. The picture of college life is not flattering. Some popular music, a little dancing, of the rowdy type, and the youthful zest of a group of bright young people increase the entertainment value for a not too particular audience.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair

Children, 8 to 12 Too violent

❖

TEN GENTLEMEN FROM WEST POINT ◇

George Montgomery, Maureen O'Hara, John Sutton, Laird Cregar, John Sheppard, Victor Francen, Harry Davenport, Ward Bond, Douglass Dumbrille, Ralph Byrd, Joe Brown, Jr., David Bacon, Esther Dale, Richard Derr, Louis Jean Heydt, S. Andrews. Screen play by Richard Maibaum, suggested by a story by Malvin Wald. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Using the facts gleaned from research, a writer with an adroit imagination might have made a corking picture about the early days of West Point, but somehow this film fails to hit the mark. Aside from political difficulties, there is little of historical importance except a battle against the Indians, demonstrating the effectiveness of West Point strategy over brute force, and here the achievement is so exaggerated that it is practically unbelievable. The scenes at West Point are interesting, and most of the men's parts are well played. George Montgomery is good in a rugged role, and Laird Cregar gives a sinister performance as *Major Carter* whose rigorous discipline to weed out the cadets and close the school becomes so cruel that it is almost unbearable. The film ends on a high note with the impressive graduation of the first class, foreshadowing the greatness of the institution in the days to come.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depends on emotional stability

Children, 8 to 12 Not recommended

❖

THEY ALL KISSED THE BRIDE ◇ ◇

Joan Crawford, Melvyn Douglas, Roland Young, Billie Burke, Allen Jenkins, Andrew Tombes, Emory Parnell, Helen Parrish, Nydia Westman, Ivan Simpson, Mary Treen, Roger Clark, Gordon Jones, Edward Gargan. Screen play by P. J. Wolfson from a story by Gina Kaus and Andrew P. Solt. Direction by Alexander Hall. Produced by Edward Kaufman. Columbia Pictures.

It would be a good idea if some pro-

ducers washed their products with the famous cleansing agent which removes tattle-tale gray. "They All Kissed the Bride" may be able to get by the Hays office but it certainly is dingy. The story concerns *"M. J.,"* a man-hating, woman executive of a trucking company, whose high-handed methods with her employees attract the attention of *Michael Holmes,* a crusading writer. Michael crashes the gate when *"M. J.'s"* sister is being married, gulps a stiff drink and repeatedly kisses the bride, thus making such a favorable impression on *"M.J."* that her knees turn to water when she looks at him. The picture becomes a battle for the upper hand between *Michael* and *"M. J."* Most of the time they are either acquiring a hangover or recovering from one, but finally under the influence of alcohol and *Michael's* electrifying charm *"M. J."* discovers that she is neither an incurably inhuman employer nor a confirmed spinster. It is all intended to be very funny and some of it lives up to requirements. Joan Crawford in the role of *"M. J."* wears exaggerated clothes, behaves like a peevish shrew, and jitterbugs—all very competently. Melvyn Douglas as *Michael* describes himself as a "congenital cad with a hangover" and he fits the description.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Emphasizes bad taste and low standards

Children, 8 to 12 Entirely unsuitable

❖

THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES ◇ ◇

Frank Craven, Mary Howard, June Walker, Donald Woods, Vivian Blane, George Holmes, Jerome Cowan, Charles Lane, James Flavin, Ruth Warren. Original screen play by Samuel G. Engle. Direction by Thomas Z. Loring. Produced by Sol M. Wurtzel. 20th Century Fox.

The relating of a murder case built erroneously on circumstantial evidence provides the background for a triumph of a woman's intuition. Unfortunately for the picture's aim to entertain, this triumph is far-fetched enough to lose a good deal of audience sympathy. The action is knit together by Frank Craven's easy narration, which gives a smooth continuity to the flashback method of telling the story. Those who have been studying first aid will be amused at the use made of the bandages by June Walker (as the district attorney's intuitive wife) in attempting to obtain a confession of guilt.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fairly entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

TOMBSTONE ◇ ◇

Richard Dix, Kent Taylor, Edgar Buchanan, Frances Gifford, Don Castle, Clem Bevans. Based on the book of the same name by Walter Noble Burns. Direction by William McGann. Harry Sherman-Paramount.

Wyatt Earp, who has brought reform to various roaring towns of the early West, arrives to clean up Tombstone. While Richard Dix as *Earp* swaggers around in dangerous spots in the traditional manner of the Westerns, he makes an acceptable hero. The original twist in the picture comes in the character of *Johnny,* played by Don Castle, a delightful youngster with a twinkle in his eye, who takes a fling at wickedness and is regenerated at his leisure. Dance hall scenes are amusing rather than sensational, and most of the episodes are handled with regard for a youthful audience. The scene showing the killing of a child, however, is too harrowing for this type of film. Good photography and a degree of emphasis on character development raises this above average for a Western.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Too violent

❖

UNITED WE STAND ◇ ◇

Commentator: Lowell Thomas. Fox Movietone News-20th Century-Fox.

A documentary history of Hitler's rise to power, compiled from the archives of Movietone News, with inserts from British, German and documentary films.

Covering a period of twenty-three years from the time of the Versailles treaty to the present date, this is a collection of newsreel pictures, emphasizing the disasters which have fallen to the lot of the democracies because they have not acted as a united group. The earlier shots are poorly taken, like all news pictures of those years; the film is full of horrors and is very depressing. For those who want to refresh their memories on the detailed events which led up to the present war, it has historical value.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. Horror outweighs constructive values

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

WINGS FOR THE EAGLE ◇ ◇

Ann Sheridan, Dennis Morgan, Jack Carson, George Tobias, Russell Arms, Don DeFore. Original screen play by Byron Morgan and B. H. Arkow. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. Produced by Robert Lord. Warner Bros.

Against the authentic background of the big Lockheed plant at Burbank, California, the story—or stories—of some of the workers are told; of *Corky* who wants defense work to avoid the draft, of his friend *Brad* who dreams of a big engineering job and nearly muffs his chances of getting any aircraft job; of his wife who leaves him although she still loves him; of the *Hansos,* father and son, who have planned a double play, the older *Hanso* to make the planes the younger to fly them; and of the sharp change in attitudes brought about by Pearl Harbor. The picture is neither deeply stirring nor blithely amusing. Its best attractions are its actual

scenes of an aircraft factory and the accurate mirroring of its atmosphere. George Tobias as the older *Hanso* gives an outstanding performance in a cast that is uniformly good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining and informative

Children, 8 to 12 Involved, lacks sufficient interest

❖

YANKEE DOODLE DANDY ◇ ◇

James Cagney, Joan Leslie, Walter Huston,. Richard Whorf, Irene Manning. George Tobias, Rosemary DeCamp, Jeanne Cagney, Frances Langford, George Barbier, S. Z. Sakall, Walter Catlett. Screen play by Robert Buckner and Edmund Joseph; original story by Robert Buckner. Directed by Michael Curtiz. Warner Bros.

"Yankee Doodle Dandy" is a film for the whole family to enjoy. James Cagney takes the part of George M. Cohan in the picture, and while he does not actually look like Cohan, nevertheless he inspires one to believe in the genius of the man whom he interprets. As a picture of achievement, thoroughly American in spirit, the film is an inspiration and a delight. Beginning in the days before the first World War it carries us up to the present time. It brings back the good old days when Broadway entertainment offered vaudeville and musical shows in extravagant stage settings, and it gives us again the rousing war songs, "It's a Grand Old Flag" and "Over There," with which Cohan set a whole nation singing. The fine camera work of James Wong Howe, Carl Wyle's art work, and the masterly direction of Michael Curtiz combine with the acting of an outstanding cast to make this a real treat for film goers.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Good

★ ★ ★

SHORT SUBJECTS

PUSS'N TOOTS ◇ ◇

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Cartoon.

A most amusing color short shows a tiny mouse getting the best of his enemy, the cat, by enticing *Puss* onto the automatic record-changer of a phonograph, where a variety of musical rhythms add to his discomfort and the mirth of the audience. Fun for all.

❖

WINNING YOUR WINGS ◇ ◇

Warner Bros.

As a recruiting film for the Air forces this is tops. Few young men can fail to respond to Jimmy Stewart's plea for cadets to learn to pilot the planes, become bombardiers and engineers, members of the technical forces and ground crews. He emphasizes opportunity for the individual as well as service to the country. Pictures of the planes and their crews are photographed effectively, and the subject matter is up to date and informative. Interesting for all ages.

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FEATURE FILMS

—o—

Apache Trail
Berlin Correspondent
Between Us Girls
The Big Street
Careful, Soft Shoulder
Desperate Journey
Here We Go Again
Highways By Night
Hillbilly Blitzkrieg
Iceland
Invisible Agent
Journey Into Fear
Men of Texas
Mexican Spitfire's Elephant
Now, Voyager
Orchestra Wives
Panama Hattie
Pardon My Sarong
The Pied Piper
Pierre of The Plains
The Pride of The Yankees
Priorities On Parade
Seven Sisters
Somewhere I'll Find You
Suicide Squadron
Sundown Jim
Tales of Manhattan
The Talk of The Town
Tish
Undercover Man
Wake Island
War Against Mrs. Hadley
Wings and The Woman
A Yank At Eton

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FEATURE FILMS

APACHE TRAIL ◇ ◇

William Lundigan, Lloyd Nolan, Donna Reed, Ann Ayars, Chill Wills, Gloria Holden. Screen play by Maurice Geraghty, based on an original story by Ernest Haycox. Musical score by Sol Kaplan. Direction by Richard Thorpe. M-G M.

A good cast presents a basically sound story in a Western, unusual in its emphasis on human psychology as well as fast moving action, of which it has plenty. It concerns a man who breaks free of a renegade brother to go straight, running an isolated stagecoach station. The brother comes there bringing trouble and Indians down on everyone's head until he redeems himself in one last heroic act.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Better than average Western

Children, 8 to 12
Thrills and action not too much for this audience

❖

BERLIN CORRESPONDENT ◇ ◇

Virginia Gilmore, Dana Andrews, Mona Maris, Martin Kosleck, Sig Ruman, Kurt Katch, Erwin Kalser, Torben Meyer, William Edmunds, Hans Schumm, Leonard Mudie, Hans Von Morhart, Christian Rub. Original screen play by Steve Fisher and Jack Andrews. Direction by Eugene Forde. Produced by Byron Foy. 20th Century-Fox.

Audiences should be warned not to confuse this melodramatic fantasy with any authentic material published by actual foreign correspondents. Anyone who has read William Shirer's "Berlin Diary" or Harry W. Flannery's "Assignment to Berlin" will appreciate that the impression this film gives of the bad ethics and lack of dignity of the profession is both unflattering and false. In creating thrilling action, it has its hero send news comments over the air in code, falsify his American passport, fall in love and marry a girl connected with the Gestapo, and fool Nazi agents who are shown as incredibly stupid. If we must have entertainment based on the present war, let us at least have truth, not illusions to pamper the impressionable.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Poor: no

Children, 8 to 12
No

❖

BETWEEN US GIRLS ◇ ◇

Diana Barrymore, Robert Cummings, Kay Francis, John Boles, Andy Devine, Ethel Griffies, Walter Catlett, Guinn Williams, Scotty Beckett, Andrew Tombes, Peter Jamerson, Mary Treen, Lillian Yarbo, Irving Bacon. Screen play by Myles Connolly and True Boardman based on "Le Fruit Vert" by Regis Gignoux and Jacques Thery. Musical director Charles Previn. Producer-director Henry Koster. Universal Pictures.

This entertaining farce comedy is an adroit choice of vehicle for Diana Barrymore. It gives her a splendid opportunity to show her versatility and she proves her talent without a doubt. It is the story of a young and charming actress who has a young and equally charming mother. The mother is roman-

tically interested in a man who does not realize that her child is a grown woman, and the girl, fearing that her mother's romance will go on the rocks because of her, masquerades as a child. We see Miss Barrymore first as an actress in the elaborate make-up of *Queen Victoria* at eighty, then as the lovely girl, happy in her reunion with her mother, and later as a pig-tailed brat of thirteen. Then, caught rehearsing for the role of *Sadie Thompson* in "Rain," she pretends that she is the slightly inebriated, tough aunt of the family, and finally we see her again on the stage playing *Joan of Arc*. This is a wide range to cover and Miss Barrymore gives subtly clever shadings to each interpretation.

The story is very amusing and often hilarious, and sophisticated innuendoes are skilfully handled. The cast is excellent. Henry Koster's direction is swiftly paced and tasteful. The picture should establish Miss Barrymore's right to stardom.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Highly amusing

Children, 8 to 12 Mature but entertaining

THE BIG STREET ◇ ◇

Henry Fonda, Lucille Ball, Barton MacLane, Eugene Pallette, Agnes Moorehead, Sam Levene, Ray Collins, Marion Martin, William Orr, George Cleveland, Ozzie Nelson and his orchestra. Screen play by Leonard Spigelgass from the story "Little Pinks" by Damon Runyon. Direction by Irving Reis. Produced by Damon Runyon. RKO.

Damon Runyon treats his subject matter much as O. Henry did, choosing a certain theme and elaborating it. In this story *Little Pinks* is a busboy, holding himself so lowly that a night club singer, a cheap, selfish, kept woman becomes a goddess to him. Her belife in her own importance, fostered by this adoration, results in paranoia, and when at last her dream is shattered, she cannot survive the shock. The character of *Gloria*, efficiently portrayed by Lucille Ball, is very unpleasant, and the viewpoint is cynical, but those who like Damon Runyon will enjoy his original plot development, his thrusts of humor and his array of oddly assorted minor personages.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Too unhappy a theme

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable

CAREFUL, SOFT SHOULDER ◇ ◇

Virginia Bruce, James Ellison, Aubrey Mather, Sheila Ryan, Ralph Byrd, Sigurd Tor, Charles Tannen, William B. Davidson, Dale Winter. Original screen play by Oliver H. P. Garrett. Direction by Oliver H. P. Garrett. Produced by Walter Morosco. 20th Century-Fox.

While not pretentious, this picture is quite entertaining. The heroine is a pretty, lightweight, none too discerning member of Washington's smart set who, foolishly chattering in a restaurant, is overheard to say that she would like to be a spy. An enemy agent considers her good material, and by convincing her that he represents the U. S. Secret Service he gets her to accept his orders, as she visualizes herself as a Mata Hari. She blunders along, entangling all her friends and relatives in dangerous situations from which they emerge mainly through athletic prowess. Virginia Bruce is given light dialogue which reminds one of Gracie Allen's persiflage. The action is not realistic, but the picture has a novel twist and it serves to pass the hour lightly.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value; unobjectionable

Children, 8 to 12 Better not

DESPERATE JOURNEY ◇ ◇

Errol Flynn, Ronald Reagan, Nancy Coleman, Raymond Massey, Alan Hale, Arthur Kennedy, Ronald Sinclair, Albert Basserman, Sig Ruman, Patrick O'Moore, Felix Basch, Ilka Gruning. Original screen play by Arthur T. Horman. Music by Max Steiner. Direction by Raoul Walsh. Warner Bros.

"Desperate Journey," which pictures the escape of the remaining members of an Allied bombing expedition over Germany, has this in common with glorified Westerns: it is wildly exciting and at the same time so improbable that one is not held in a state of high tension or deeply concerned when a few of the heroes are killed. It is simply amazing how many Nazis, armed to the teeth with bayonets and hand grenades, fall to the dust at the application of a punch to the jaw; at just the right moment Goering's private car draws up to spirit the fugitives across the Reich, a kind-hearted German damsel aids in their escape, and after a hair-raising chase through live oaks and dry hills, supposed to be part of Belgium, they find the means to get home to England. Action is lusty, the cast colorful, photography admirable, and Max Steiner's music very appropriate, but it is doubtful if such an example of wishful thinking improves the public morale at the present time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Questionable. Main characters too irresponsible

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting

HERE WE GO AGAIN ◇ ◇

Jim Jordan, Marian Jordan, Edgar Bergen, "Charlie McCarthy," Harold Peary, Ginny Simms, Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Ray Noble, Isabel Randolph, "Mortimer Snerd." Screen play by Paul Gerard Smith and Joe Bigelow. Produced and directed by Allan Dwan. RKO.

Mollie and Fibber McGee celebrate their twentieth wedding anniversary at a swank resort beyond their means, and Fibber, in

trying to meet the bills, gets mixed up in a "phony" deal which involves Bergen's pocket book. The plot is feeble but Mollie and Fibber, Charlie McCarthy, Mortimer Snerd, Mrs. Uppington, the Great Gildersleeve and other radio favorites cavort true to form.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
If interested

Children, 8 to 12
Probably good fun

❖

HIGHWAYS BY NIGHT ◇ ◇

Richard Carlson, Jane Randolph, Jane Darwell, Barton MacLane, Ray Collins, Gordon Jones, Renee Haal, George Cleveland, Marten Lamont, Jack La Rue. From the story "Silver Spoon" by Clarence Budington Kelland. Direction by Peter Godfrey. RKO.

Clarence Budington Kelland's success story of the young man who went forth to learn by driving a truck that life is not all theory and gadgets is not changed for the better by the shift of emphasis from silver spoon to highways by night. The brawling and the drinking are accented to the point where one would expect a modern Horace Greeley's advice to be "Get drunk" instead of "Go West, young man." The film misses the opportunity which the original story offered for wholesome, if somewhat obvious, entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No

Children, 8 to 12
No

❖

HILLBILLY BLITZKRIEG ◇ ◇

Bud Duncan, Edgar Kennedy, Cliff Nazarro, Lucien Littlefield, Doris Linden, Alan Baldwin, Jimmie Dodd, Frank Austin, Nicolle Andre, Martin Kippen, Jerry Jerome, Jack Carr, Teddy Mangean. Original screen play by Ray S. Harris from the King Features Syndicate's Copyrighted Feature, "Barney Google and Snuffy Smith" by Billy DeBec. Direction by Roy Mack. Produced by Edward Griss. Monogram.

Here is another of the amusingly human adaptations of the King Feature's cartoons. *Snuffy, Google,* and *Sergeant Gatling* are engaged in aiding the U. S. War effort in the remote hillbilly region of the Smoky Mountain range, and with them anything can happen—and does. Alien spies are after a secret invention, a war rocket, and at manoeuvres *Snuffy* goes up in the contraption to the hilarious enjoyment of the audience. Needless to say, the spies are circumvented after a number of homespun, rib-tickling misadventures.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Amusing

Children, 8 to 12
Excellent: full of action and laughter

❖

INVISIBLE AGENT ◇ ◇

Ilona Massey, Jon Hall, Peter Lorre, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, J. Edward Bromberg, John Litel, Albert Basserman, Holmes Herbert. Producer, Frank Lloyd. Direction by Edwin L. Marin. Universal Pictures.

To combine humorous fantasy with brutal realism seems too much for anybody to attempt. The experiment is not successful in "Invisible Agent." The film offers fascinating trick photography and, for those who like them, melodramatic thrills; but possibly only a truly complacent public could really enjoy the picture as a whole. Others are too conscious of the actual menace of the Axis powers to be entertained by the absurd tricks of the invisible man, and are too fed up with horrors to find them relaxing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No

Children, 8 to 12
No

❖

ICELAND ◇ ◇

Sonja Henie, John Payne, Jack Oakie, Felix Bressart, Osa Massen, Joan Merrill, Fritz Feld, Sterling Holloway, Adeline deWalt Reynolds, Ludwig Stossel, Duke Adlon, Ilka Gruning, Sammy Kaye and His Orchestra. Original screen play by Robert Ellis and Helen Logan. Musical direction by Emil Newman. Direction by Bruce Humberstone. 20th Century-Fox.

This musical comedy features beautiful ice skating sequences and a timely story with an unusual mainspring. An Icelandic custom decrees that the older daughter must marry before the younger. Thus the already engaged younger daughter waits impatiently for her sister to manoeuvre a landing of her Marine. Though the humor is somewhat broad at times it is done with so much fun that few would find it offensive. It is pleasing entertainment, leaving only a vague regret that the beauty of the ice carnival scenes is not enhanced by color.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Entertaining, lovely skating and music

Children, 8 to 12
If the type appeals

❖

JOURNEY INTO FEAR ◇ ◇

Joseph Cotten, Dolores Del Rio, Ruth Warrick, Agnes Moorehead, Jack Durant, Everett Sloane, Eustace Wyatt, Frank Readick, Jack Moss, Stefan Schnabel, Hans Conried, Robert Meltzer, Richard Bennett. Screen play by Orson Welles and Joseph Cotten from a novel by Eric Ambler. Direction by Norman Foster. RKO.

This picture graphically portrays the mood of terror, suspicion, and helplessness which comes to a man threatened with assassination; then the hopeful moments of apparent escape; the sinking feeling after being recaptured; and the overwhelming relief of complete release. Trick shots and weird sound effects, which are used with a minimum of dialogue in the first sequence, fill the audience with fear even before the character feels it. A good deal of the success of the film depends on the proficient cast from the Mercury group who seem willing to subordinate personal interests to the business of telling a good story well, but photography and direction also are responsible for excellent melodrama.

The story is of an American representative of a munitions firm in Turkey who finds himself marked for death by Nazi agents in order to delay the delivery of war materials to that country.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 If emotionally stable — **Children, 8 to 12** Too harrowing

❖

MEN OF TEXAS ◇ ◇

Robert Stack, Brod Crawford, Jackie Cooper, Leo Carrillo, Anne Gwynne, Ralph Bellamy, Jane Darwell, John Litel. Direction by Ray Enright. Universal.

Set in the period just following the Civil War, "Men of Texas" is an historical western in which the conflict is between those who support the Federal Government and those who, under the guise of loyalty to Texas as a state, commit all sorts of lawless acts. The film makes a well-intentioned attempt to draw a parallel between the tactics of this latter faction and those of present-day Fifth Columnists, but the story is too poorly developed to be really interesting.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

MEXICAN SPITFIRE'S ELEPHANT ◇ ◇

Lupe Velez, Leon Errol, Walter Reed, Elisabeth Risdon, Lydia Bilbrook, Marion Martin, Lyle Talbot, Luis Alberni, George Cleveland, Marten Lamont. Screen play by Charles E. Roberts. Story by Charles E. Roberts and Leslie Goodwins. Direction by Leslie Goodwins. RKO-Radio.

There is little difference between this newest "Spitfire" picture and its forerunners in the series. The smugglers who are attempting to get by the customs officer try to use *Uncle Matt* as the carrier of a jewel hidden in a small plastic elephant. The picture is noisy slapstick with a good deal of drinking, but it is funny enough if you like the type.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

NOW, VOYAGER ◇ ◇

Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Gladys Cooper, Bonita Granville, Ilka Chase, John Loder, Lee Patrick, Franklin Pangborn, Katherine Alexander, James Rennie, Mary Wicks, Janis Wilson, Frank Puglia, Michael Ames, Charles Drake, David Clyde. Screen play by Casey Robinson from novel by Olive Higgens Prouty. Direction by Irving Rapper. Produced by Hal B. Wallis. M-G-M.

This absorbing and beautifully executed psychological drama derives its title from lines by Walt Whitman:

"Untold want, by life and land ne'er granted,
Now, Voyager, sail thou forth to seek and find."

It tells the story of the mental readjustment of a frustrated, unhappy woman who through love and service to others, learns to face life, serene and unafraid. Bette Davis' role is a sympathetic one, and she gives a perfectly modulated interpretation of the lonely, neurotic spinster who, dominated by a despotic mother, is first helped by a wise psychiatrist and then sent "forth to seek and find." The way to mental health is long and hard but she is gradually freed from her inhibitions and her inferiority complex until her natural beauty returns and she finds life rich and full of promise.

Paul Henreid is a splendid vis-a-vis for Miss Davis. The love story is unconventional but tastefully handled, and the ending is fundamentally sound. A very fine cast and sensitive direction also help to make the film of unusual interest, stimulating, constructive and entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very mature — **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

❖

ORCHESTRA WIVES ◇ ◇

George Montgomery, Ann Rutherford, Glenn Miller, Cesar Romero, Lynn Bari, Carole Landis, Virginia Gilmore, Mary Beth Hughes, Nicholas Brothers, Grant Mitchell, Tamara Geva, Frank Orth, Henry Morgan, Jackie Gleason. Screen play by Karl Tunberg and Darrell Ware from original story by James Prindle. Direction by Archie Mayo. William LeBaron Production. 20th Century-Fox.

Since nothing but time will lessen the enthusiasm of the 'teen and college age for rhythms by Glenn Miller and his band, let us hope that they will get full measure of enjoyment from the melee of sound from saxophones, horns, drums, and crooners who give their all in "Orchestra Wives." They are the attraction, and no satellite will be disappointed in the performance, but the plot is hardly edifying. It concerns a young, too romantic girl, her hasty marriage with a member of the band, her disillusionment about the glamour of marriage, and unpleasant experiences with cheap, sophisticated women. That she learns a lesson in sportsmanship and loyalty is some compensation for the sordid details.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste — **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

PANAMA HATTIE ◇ ◇

Ann Sothern, Red Skelton, Rags Ragland, Ben Blue, Virginia O'Brien, Alan Mowbray, Dan Dailey Jr., Jackie Horner, Marsha Hunt, Carl Esmond, Pierre Watkin. Music and lyrics by Cole Porter. Screen play by Jack McGowan and Wilkie Mahoney, based on the play by Herbert Fields and B. G. DeSylva. Direction by Norman Z. McLeod. Musical direction by Danny Dare. M-G-M.

A slow-moving story does not prevent this film from being a collection of rather good vaudeville acts, which, as such, would probably hold more interest on the stage than on the screen. It definitely has its moments of

music and fun. A highlight is the scene where Red (Skelton), Rags (Ragland), and "Rowdy" (Ben Blue) have a hilarious time chasing spies in a haunted house. There is some drinking which loses much of its objectionableness through not being stressed. Entertaining singing and dancing acts make for frivolous fun.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining if they like this type

Children, 8 to 12 Of interest only in parts

❖

PARDON MY SARONG ◇ ◇

Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Virginia Bruce, Robert Paige, Nann Wynne, Leif Erickson, William Demarest, Susan "Tagalong" Levine, Lionel Atwill. Direction by Erle C. Kenton. Universal.

Abbott and Costello start out driving a bus and end up in the South Seas surrounded by tropical Hollywood settings and a slightly vulgar, jungle girl chorus. This is the usual rowdy slap-stick for which Abbott and Costello are noted. For the most part it is routine comedy, employing obvious and well-worn tricks, but for those who enjoy the type there are some hilarious episodes. *Sharkey,* the seal, puts in an original performance which seems practically human.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable but rather trashy

Children, 8 to 12 Not too good

❖

THE PIED PIPER ◇ ◇

Monty Wooley, Roddy McDowall, Anne Baxter, Otto Preminger, J. Carrol Naish, Lester Mattews, Jill Esmond, Forike Boros, Peggy Ann Garner, Morrill Rodin, Maurice Tauzin, Fleurette Zama. Screen play by Nunnally Johnson from novel by Nevil Shute. Direction by Irving Pichel. 20th Century-Fox.

Monty Wooley as *Howard* has transformed the gentle, bewildered Englishman of Nevil Shute's novel into a crochety, delightfully human and reluctant "Pied Piper" who must of necessity effect the escape of a group of children from France after the unexpectedly swift invasion of the Nazi army. He starts with two, the children of a League of Nations' official whom he encounters in the South of France, and, protesting as he goes that he dislikes children, he collects a little French girl, then a boy, later a Dutch waif, and at last the half-Jewish niece of a Gestapo agent. That the Polish child is omitted from the film version is perhaps just as well, because his fanatical hatred of the enemy is no part of this story. The delightful blending of humor, exciting episodes, and pathos make an entertaining picture which stresses individual character and comedy rather than the horrors of war.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Mature and possibly disturbing

PIERRE OF THE PLAINS ◇ ◇

John Carroll, Ruth Hussey, Bruce Cabot, Phil Brown, Reginald Owen, Henry Travers, Evelyn Ankers, Pat McVey, Frederic Worlock, Charles Stevens, Sheldon Leonard, Louis Ranson. Screen play by Lawrence Kimble and Bertram Millhauser. Based upon the play by Edgar Selwyn. Direction by George B. Seitz. M-G-M.

"Pierre of the Plains" on the stage was pleasant sentimental hokum. On the screen, with an altered and elaborated plot, it has become implausible piffle. However, because of its lovely outdoor scenery and Robin-Hood flavor, it may still be fairly well received by incurable romantics.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Confused ethics

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE PRIDE OF THE YANKEES ◇ ◇

Gary Cooper, Teresa Wright, Babe Ruth, Walter Brennan, Dan Duryea, Elsa Janssen, Ludwig Stossel, Virginia Gilmore, Bill Dickey, Ernie Adams, Pierre Watkin, Harry Harvey. Screen play by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Jo Swerling from the original story by Paul Gallico. Direction by Sam Wood. Musical direction by Leigh Harline. Goldwyn.

Sometimes the sons of immigrants find the essence of American life and therefore adhere more closely to the ideals of democracy than those whose forbears have lived here for many generations. So with Lou Gehrig. Although his achievement was not in the field of engineering chosen for him by his ambitious mother, he attained fame in a calling which placed his name on the lips and in the hearts of millions, the intrinsically American game of baseball. His success was due not only to his great athletic ability but to his belief that a man must give the best that is in him to accomplish anything worth while. Simple, unspoiled by adulation, genuine in all relationships, in his marriage as in his friendships, Lou Gehrig could take defeat without flinching when that too came his way. After 2130 consecutive games his hand wavered, his eyes failed, and he had to learn from the doctors that he had made his last home run.

Here is one of Gary Cooper's finest characterizations, ranking with his work in "Sergeant York." Lou Gehrig seems to live again. Teresa Wright is an admirable choice for the wife whose keen interest in the things he loved and whose unfailing devotion made their marriage an unusually happy one.

Direction is splendid. The scenes on the baseball diamond are so well presented that one experiences all the thrills of a major league game. But most important is the feel-

ing that here is something truly American, somthing we are all a part of, and believe in, and are proud of when the veneer of individual circumstance is cast aside.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent
Children, 8 to 12 Long and certain parts uninteresting

❖

PRIORITIES ON PARADE ◇ ◇

Ann Miller, Johnnie Johnston, Jerry Colonna, Betty Rhodes, Vera Vague, Harry Barris, Eddie Quillan, Dave Willock. Original screen play by Art Arthur and Frank Loesser. Musical direction by Victor Young. Direction by Albert S. Rogell. Paramount.

Since musical comedies must be up to the moment, this picture uses a big airplane factory for its locale, and the introduction of a swing band into the ranks of the workers gives the excuse for good music of the lighter sort, a jitterbug ball and a lot of merriment. The heroine is an awe-inspiring female welder who becomes very chic and beguiling when she doffs her armor plate. Vera Vague and Jerry Colonna indulge in horse-play and bandy wisecracks and are funny if you like the type. Specialty numbers include Ann Miller's spirited dancing and a clever chorus pantomime of figures dressed like machines, while the whole show ends up with a grand finale on a patriotic theme.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining
Children, 8 to 12 Fair

❖

SEVEN SISTERS ◇ ◇

Kathryn Grayson, Van Heflin, Marsha Hunt, Cecelia Parker, Diana Lewis, S. Z. Sakall, Isabel Elsom, Carl Esmond, Louise Beavers, Donald Meek, Lewis Howard. Original screen play by Walter Reisch and Leo Townsend. Direction by Frank Borzage. Produced by Joe Pasternak. M-G-M.

Joe Pasternak has adapted his gift for romantic fantasy to Kathryn Grayson's talents as he once did for Deanna Durbin's. The result is a charming idyl, song and dance and merriment in a lovely setting. It is like a gay musical comedy with S. Z. Sakall providing the humor, Kathryn and Van Heflin the romance, and Marsha Hunt the menace, a gently comical menace. The locale is a fanciful Dutch community in Michigan in tulip time, where an elderly Dutchman keeps an inn and preserves all his beloved Old World traditions. One of these traditions is that none of his seven lovely daughters may have a suitor until the eldest marries. This daughter, who resembles her dear departed mother, complicates matters for her sisters.

Musically and pictorially, the film is a delight and a treat the whole family can appreciate and enjoy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent
Children, 8 to 12 Excellent

SOMEWHERE I'LL FIND YOU ◇ ◇

Clark Gable, Lana Turner, Robert Sterling, Patricia Dane, Reginald Owen, Lee Patrick, Charles Dingle, Tamara Shayne, Molly Lamont, Leonid Kinskey, Sara Haden, Keye Luke. Based upon a Cosmopolitan Magazine story by Charles Hoffman. Direction by Wesley Ruggles. M-G-M.

War and two brothers' rivalry for a girl's love are the motivating factors in this melodrama of adventure and romance. The brothers, war correspondents, are sent by their newspapers to Indo China to hunt for the girl who has been reported lost. They finally wind up in Bataan just in time to be in the fighting. The story is trite, but the cast will appeal, and there is plenty of fierce action to keep up the interest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature in treatment
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

SUICIDE SQUADRON ◇ ◇

Anton Walbrook, Sally Gray, Derick de Marney, Kenneth Kent, Percy Parsons, J. H. Roberts, Cecil Parker, Guy Middleton, John Laurie, Frederick Valk. Original screen play by Terence Young. Direction by Brian Desmond Hurst. Republic.

This story of a Polish flyer stresses the poignant theme of artistic temperament at grips with the bestialities of war. In the telling, the flash-back method is used. A great pianist, an amnesia patient, sits at the piano and, running over his own favorite compositions, recalls at the last the horrors of the bombing of Warsaw, his escape to America, and the subsequent events leading up to his re-enlistment as a "vengeance" flyer with the R.A.F., and finally the crash of his plane. The flash-back technique at times begets awkwardness, but the excellent acting of even the minor characters more than compensates for defects, and the appropriate and often thrilling musical accompaniment is a rich contribution to the whole. The love story in which his American wife throws all her influence on the side of his concert career is of secondary interest.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent
Children, 8 to 12 No interest

❖

SUNDOWN JIM ◇ ◇

John Kimbrough, Virginia Gilmore, Arleen Whelan, Joseph Sawyer, Paul Hurst, Moroni Olsen, Don Costello, LeRoy Mason, Lane Chandler, James Bush, Charles Tannen, Cliff Edwards. Screen play by Robert R. Metzler and William Bruckner. Based on the Collier's novel by Ernest Haycox. Direction by James Tinling. 20th Century-Fox.

Sundown Jim, played by John Kimbrough, is a sheriff who brings law and order to a wide open town without using a gun. The

character is a likable one and gives the picture its principal interest. Otherwise it is a routine western with rather more than the usual quota of killings.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Questionable

❖

TALES OF MANHATTAN ◇ ◇

Charles Boyer, Rita Hayworth, Thomas Mitchell, Ginger Rogers, Henry Fonda, Charles Laughton, Edward G. Robinson, Paul Robeson, Ethel Waters, Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Eugene Pallette, Cesar Romero, Gail Patrick, Roland Young, Marion Martin, Elsa Lanchester, James Gleason, George Sanders, J. Carrol Naish, Victor Francen. Original story and screen play by Ben Hecht, Ferenc Molnar, Donald Ogden Stewart, Samuel Hoffenstein, Alan Campbell, Ladislas Fodor, L. Vadnai, L. Gorog, Lamar Trotti, Henry Blankfort. Direction by Julien Duvivier. Produced by Boris Morros and S. P. Eagle. 20th Century-Fox.

"Tales of Manhattan" is a cinematic oddity, and although it is loaded with stars, it is the director's, Julien Duvivier's, picture. In its episodic form it follows the pattern of his "Carnet de Bal" and "Lydia," but the subject matter is more artificial than in either of those films. The slim thread holding the incidents together is the story of a tail coat on which a curse is laid in the tailor shop. The coat passes from hand to hand until it drapes a scare crow in a negro's corn patch. Each episode expresses some form of extreme mental cruelty in human relations, and it leaves an ironic impression of futility. The last incident is different in mood: it is a musical treat and is set in unrealistic, artistic beauty. But it is a theatrical climax which is out of key with the other episodes.

The large cast embellishes the production, but the individual portrayals will add no renown as notable achievements. The picture is one for sophisticates, for those particularly interested in novelty and sardonic smartness. It is not surprising that Duvivier could have directed it, for the French are past masters at this type. It is surprising, however, that so many writers could have projected the pattern. It is clever and it is interesting, but it will not please anyone who believes that human nature is fundamentally kind and sound.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No; confusing **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

THE TALK OF THE TOWN ◇ ◇

Cary Grant, Jean Arthur, Ronald Colman, Edgar Buchanan, Glenda Farrell, Charles Dingle, Emma Dunn, Rex Ingram, Leonid Kinskey, Tome Tyler, Don Beddoe, George Watts. Screen play by Irwin Shaw and Sidney Buchman based on a story by Sidney Buchman. Direction by George Stevens. Columbia Pictures.

In raising the question of whether or not the law, as practiced in some police courts, can be unjust, this film has an element of social significance. But while its underlying theme is serious, it is played for comedy. The pedantic dean of a law school, vacationing in a New England mill town, becomes interested in the case of the village soap-box orator, who has been accused of arson and murder, and undertakes his legal defense. Also befriending the man is the jurist's pretty housekeeper-secretary. The plot has entertaining romantic and humorous, as well as melodramatic angles, and the excellent cast makes good use of all of them.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

❖

TISH ◇ ◇

Marjorie Main, Zasu Pitts, Aline MacMahon, Lee Bowman, Guy Kibbee, Virginia Grey, Susan Peters, Richard Quine. Screen play by Harry Ruskin, founded in part on stories by Mary Roberts Rinehart. Direction by S. Sylvan Simon. M-G-M.

The first part of the film recaptures, with only a certain amount of exaggeration, the spirit of Mary Roberts Rinehart's trio of dauntless old maids, although bringing the story up to the present vitiates some of the humor of the original stories. The latter part changes the mood and is anything but plausible. The intrepid trio sponsor a romance and wind up with a baby of unknown parentage on their hands. Finally the father comes back from a bomber-ferrying trip and clears up the situation. There will be differences of opinion over the choice of Marjorie Main as *Tish*. As a whole the cast is good, the supporting players turning in especially fine performances.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining in part **Children, 8 to 12** First half funny and amusing

❖

UNDERCOVER MAN ◇ ◇

William Boyd, Andy Clyde, Jay Kirby, Antonio Moreno, Nora Lane, Chris Pin Martin, Esther Estrella, John Vosper, Eva Puig, Alan Baldwin, Jack Rockwell, Pierce Lyden. Direction by Lesley Selander. Paramount.

Against a Mexican Border setting, *Hopalong Cassidy* helps representatives of the Mexican Government to break up a band of outlaws and thus proves that even in the 19th century there was opportunity for being a "good neighbor." The scenery and action will meet with approval from followers of this popular series.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Enjoyable

WAKE ISLAND ◇ ◇

Brian Donlevy, MacDonald Carey, Robert Preston, William Bendix, Albert Dekker, Walter Abel, Mikhall Rasumny, Bill Goodwin, Barbara Britton, Damian O'Flynn, Frank Albertson, Phillip Terry, Philip Van Zandt, Keith Richards. Screen play by W. R. Burnett and Frank Butler. From an original story by the United States Marine Corps. Direction by John Farrow. Paramount.

This film gives a thrilling picturization of the defense of Wake Island, as re-created from facts given out by the War Department. The heroic action of the out-numbered Marines needs no ballyhoo to make it impressive, and audiences will find this production exceptionally moving because of its straightforward, honest presentation. Photography and sound effects are magnificent and give one the feeling of being actually on the scene. Humor is used judiciously to relieve the tension, but the film is documentary or war-reporting in type, and the writers have wisely refrained from introducing any sentimental or trivial plot to detract from the real significance of their story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE WAR AGAINST MRS. HADLEY ◇ ◇

Edward Arnold, Fay Bainter, Richard Ney, Jean Rogers, Sara Allgood, Spring Byington, Van Johnson, Isobel Elsom, Frances Rafferty, Dorothy Morris, Halliwell Hobbes, Connie Gilchrist, Horace McNally, Miles Mander, "Rags" Ragland, Mark Daniels, Carl Switzer. Original screen play by George Oppenheimer. Direction by Harold B. Bucquet. Produced by Irving Asher. M-G-M.

"The War Against Mrs. Hadley" offers entertaining propaganda designed to counteract the belief that it is possible for anyone to escape the responsibilities and sacrifices demanded in the present crisis. *Mrs. Hadley,* a charming, wealthy widow, has been sheltered and indulged by her children, her friends, and her personal physician; her home is her castle where no intrusion, not even total war, is permitted to disturb the formalities and pleasant routine of her life. How circumstances awaken her and bring out her inherently fine qualities makes a timely and moving drama. Sensitive direction and the exceptionally fine cast deserve special praise for creating people who are human and who have both breeding and character. The title role, as interpreted by Miss Bainter, is sympathetic in spite of its veneer of intolerance. The film shows Washington as it is today, hectic, overcrowded, and confused, in contrast with the gracious isolation of *Mrs. Hadley's* home. Besides being most entertaining, the production leaves one acutely conscious of a changing world in which service and cooperation are demanded of all.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Yes; no war scenes

❖

WINGS AND THE WOMAN ◇ ◇

Anna Neagle, Robert Newton, Edward Chapman, Joan Kemp-Welch, Nora Swinburne, Charles Carson, Brefni O'Rorke, Muriel George. Screen play by Miles Malleson. Original by Lord Castlerose. Direction by Herbert Wilcox. RKO-Radio.

The life of Amy Johnson Mollison, pioneer woman flier, is inspiringly pictured in this intimate, tastefully handled film biography. The script is exceedingly well written and gives a sympathetic understanding of the temperaments of two daring adventurers who were united by a common interest and mutual admiration but who were unable to live happily together. The thrill and hazards of their long and lonely flights and the glory of their successes are made vividly real, and the pictures of old type planes give a fine appreciation of the amazing development of aviation since Miss Johnson made her first solo flight to Australia. Anna Neagle and Robert Newton handle their roles with great understanding and skill. The film is outstanding both in subject matter and in production values.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature in theme

❖

A YANK AT ETON ◇ ◇

Mickey Rooney, Edmund Gwenn, Ian Hunter, Freddie Bartholomew, Marta Linden, Juanita Quigley, Alan Mowbray, Peter Lawford, Raymond Severn, Tina Thayer, Minna Phillips, Terry Kilburn. Screen play by George Oppenheimer, Lionel Houser and Thomas Phipps from an original story by George Oppenheimer. Direction by Norman Taurog. Produced by John W. Considine Jr. M-G-M.

Mickey Rooney may change his name to *Timothy Dennis* in this new setting but most of his admirers will see him as just *Andy Hardy,* for he is much the same boy who has to learn life's lessons the hard way. There is humor in the boy's typically American reactions to the formalities and traditions of Eton, and it is fun to see Mickey in the school uniform, to sympathize with his shock over his first game of English football, and to get his reaction to the "fagging" system. But he learns that English boys are "people," too, and as human, likable and fine as any of his former American schoolmates, and thus another link is forged in the bond of understanding between the two countries.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

WAR REPORTING FILMS

The American public is now privileged to see films made by the British Ministry of Education for British audiences as a graphic report on the progress of the war. These films have been made available by request for the theatre showing. Many of them may be had gratis, others at a nominal fee, and they all can be shown to you at your neighborhood theatres if there is sufficient demand. They are from ten to twenty minutes long and pack more thrills, drama, information and sheer artistry into a few minutes than most films designed solely for entertainment offer in an hour. As someone said at a recent press showing, "They out-miniver Mrs. Miniver."

Besides the British films, there are similar ones, financed by the refugees from occupied countries, showing the activities of their armed forces in collaboration with the British. One of these, *The Diary of a Polish Flyer,* is most beautifully narrated and is made from actual battle shots taken by Polish airmen in action.

If you are interested in seeing these films, we suggest that you request your local exhibitor to show them.

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FEATURE FILMS

Across the Pacific
Army Surgeon
The Black Swan
Cairo
Destination Unknown
Dr. Renault's Secret
Escape from Hongkong
Eyes in the Night
The Falcon's Brother
Flying Fortress
Flying Tigers
The Forest Rangers
For Me and My Gal
George Washington Slept Here
Get Hep to Love
Girl Trouble
Give Out, Sisters
The Glass Key
The Hard Way
Henry Aldrich, Editor
I Married a Witch
Journey for Margaret
Just Off Broadway
The Major and the Minor
Manila Calling
The Man in the Trunk
The Moon and Sixpence
Moonlight in Havana
Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch
My Sister Eileen
The Navy Comes Through
Nightmare
Northwest Ranger
The Omaha Trail
Once Upon a Honeymoon
One of Our Aircraft Is Missing
The Palm Beach Story
Road to Morocco
Scattergood Survives a Murder
Seven Days Leave
Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror
Sin Town
Springtime in the Rockies
Street of Chance
That Other Woman
Thunderbirds
White Cargo
Who Done It?
The World at War
War Dogs
You Can't Escape Forever
The Young Mr. Pitt

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FEATURE FILMS

ACROSS THE PACIFIC ◇ ◇

Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor, Sidney Greenstreet, Charles Halton, Sen Yung, Lee Tong Foo, Monte Blue, Frank Wilcox. Screen play by Richard Macauley from the Saturday Evening Post story by Robert Carson. Direction by John Huston. Produced by Jerry Wald and Jack Saper. Warner Bros.

Most of the action of this spy melodrama takes place on a Japanese freighter in November 1941. *Rick Leland,* a member of the U. S. Army Secret Service, shadows Japanese agents, led by *Dr. Lorenz,* a traitor to his race, and thwarts sinister plans to destroy the Panama Canal. The drama is fast-moving with plenty of suspense, thrilling crises, and a good cast. Humphrey Bogart is excellent in the role of *Leland,* Mary Astor pleasing as the lady passenger, and Sidney Greenstreet unusually fine in a disagreeable part. It is interesting to watch the work of the Chinese and Koreans who represent the Japanese in the film.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting and might terrify

◆

ARMY SURGEON ◇ ◇

James Ellison, Jane Wyatt, Kent Taylor, Wlater Reed, James Burke, George Cleveland, Cliff Clark, Dick Hogan, Eddie Dew, Ann Codee. Direction by A. Edward Sutherland. Produced by Bert Gilroy. RKO-Radio.

Because it deals with army nurses and doctors, even though it is concerned with the first World War, this film may be considered as having timely interest. It begins and ends aboard a ship on which *Mrs. Mason* is crossing to serve in the present war. As she recalls her former experiences, we see the story of her past enacted on the screen. The action is melodramatic, but between bombings it is inclined to drag. The leading characters are the nurse, an injured aviator with whom she has been in love, and the doctor, whom she later marries. The film, however, fails to arouse much interest in their personal problems.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair

Children, 8 to 12 No

◆

THE BLACK SWAN ◇ ◇

Tyrone Power, Maureen O'Hara, Laird Cregar, Thomas Mitchell, George Sanders, Anthony Quinn, George Zucco, Edward Ashley, Fortunio Bonanova, Stuart Robertson, Charles McNaughton, Willie Fung, Charles Francis, Arthur Shields, Keith Hitchcock, John Burton, Clarence Muse, Olaf Hytten. Screen play by Ben Hecht and Seton I. Miller; adapted by Seton I. Miller from the novel by Rafael Sabatini. Photographed in Technicolor. Direction by Henry King. Produced by Robert Bassler. Twentieth Century-Fox.

In these days, a swashbuckling yarn of pirates photographed in magnificent Technicolor is something to cheer about. *The Black Swan* is grand fun for all age audiences. It is far removed from modern problems and full of thrilling action and pleasant romance.

It tells the story of Captain Henry Morgan, the pirate who was captured and then pardoned by King Charles and made Governor of Jamaica on the stipulation that he rid the Caribbean of the pirate menace. Morgan accomplished this assignment, but not without fighting a conspiracy against the Crown, rebellion among his own followers and a terrific battle with the buccaneers of the Spanish Main. The gorgeous costumes and backgrounds of palaces and ships, and the scenic views of land and water have rare beauty in color.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Good, except for emotional children

❖

CAIRO ◇ ◇

Jeanette MacDonald, Robert Young, Ethel Waters, Reginald Owen, Grant Mitchell, Lionel Atwill, Edward Ciannelli, Mitchell Lewis, Dooley Wilson, Larry Nunn, Dennis Hoey, Mona Barrie, Rhys Williams, Cecil Cunningham. Screen play by John McClain, based upon an idea by Ladislas Fodor. Direction by Major W. S. Van Dyke, II. M-G-M.

The absurd comedy and the musical highlights in this film make it gay entertainment in spite of an almost too fatuous plot poking fun at the clumsy attempts of Nazis to sabotage the Suez Canal. An American reporter and a beautiful American songstress, after suspecting each other for some time, finally work together to capture the spies and save the Canal.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Not much interest

❖

DESTINATION UNKNOWN ◇ ◇

Irene Hervey, Wm. Gargan, Felix Basch, Donald Stuart, Sam Levene, Turhan Bey, Charlie Lung, Willie Fung. Direction by Ray Taylor. Universal.

This picture is patterned after a well-known type of melodramatic mystery thriller using stolen jewels, foreign agents, and international intrigue in its rather confused plot. Irene Hervey is pretty enough to make up for a good many deficiencies in the film, but she would have looked just as well in a better picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

ESCAPE FROM HONGKONG ◇ ◇

Don Terry, Leo Carrillo, Andy Devine, Marjorie Lord, Leland Hodgson, Frank Puglia, Gilbert Emery, Chester Gann. Original story by Roy Chanslor. Direction by William Nigh. Universal.

Superman has nothing on the three cowboy heroes of this spy melodrama. While in Hongkong with a sharpshooting act, they at first spend their time trying to turn in a beautiful spy because they believe she is a Nazi, then spend the rest of the time trying to rescue her from the Nazis and Japs because they discover she is a British spy.

The last scene is a fitting climax to the absurd thriller. Escaping in a speed boat, they bring down an enemy plane with their trusty rifles!

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Poor

Children, 8 to 12 Poor

◆

DR. RENAULT'S SECRET ◇ ◇

J. Carrol Naish, John Shepperd, Lynne Roberts, George Zucco, Bert Roach, Eugene Borden, Jack Norton. Screen play by William Bruckner and Robert F. Metzler. Direction by Harry Lachman. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Pseudo-scientific medical experiments, introduced into stories to increase the horror, become decidedly objectionable to the average spectator. In this an ape is supposedly transformed into a human being with the result that jealousy and murder run the gamut of bestiality.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 Dangerous

❖

EYES IN THE NIGHT ◇ ◇

Edward Arnold, Ann Harding, Donna Reed, Horace McNally, Allen Jenkins, Stanley C. Ridges, Reginald Denny, John Emery, Katherine Emery, Rosemary de Camp, Erik Rolf, Barry Nelson. Screen play by Guy Trosper and Howard Emmett Rogers, based on a book by Baynard Kendrick. Direction by Fred Zinneman. Produced by Jack Chertok. M-G-M.

That the lovely and accomplished Ann Harding should return to the screen in a Nazi spy melodrama may seem a little strange, but at least it is an original sort of spy story and she is associated with Edward Arnold who makes a notable character of *Maclain*, the blind detective As *Norma Lawry* in the picture she goes to *Maclain* for assistance in dealing with two problems: a willful step-daughter, enamored of an unworthy actor, and a ring of Nazi spies bent on filching the blue-prints of a secret weapon invented by her husband. Aided by an exceptionally clever and well-trained, seeing-eye dog, *Maclain* is able to operate with double effectiveness because he is considered harmless by the criminals and because he can work as well in the dark as in the daylight. The picture is dramatic but it has an undercurrent of humor which keeps the suspense from becoming too heavy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable

Children, 8 to 12 Unsuitable plot

✤

THE FALCON'S BROTHER ◇ ◇

George Sanders, Tom Conway, Jane Randolph, Don Barclay, Cliff Clark, Edward Gargan, Eddie Dunn, Charlotte Wynters, James Newill, Keye Luke, Armanda Varela, George Lewis. Direction by Stanley Logan. Produced by Maurice Geraghty. RKO-Radio.

George Sanders who has played in the title role in the *Falcon* pictures is leaving

the series, and this episode is apparently written to make it easier for his brother, Tom Conway, to take over. In the plot, *Gay Lawrence,* the "Falcon," is killed while shielding another man, and *Tom Lawrence* played by Conway, thwarts a Nazi plot to murder a Latin-American diplomat. The film is up to the standard of the series.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Passable if they must see murder mysteries

❖

FLYING FORTRESS ◇ ◇

Richard Greene, Carla Lehmann, Betty Stockfield, Donald Steward, Charles Heslop, Sydney King. Screen play by Brock Williams, Gordon Wellesley, and Edwrad Dryhurst. Direction by Walter Forde. Produced by Teddington Studios. Warner Bros.

Here we have a British version of a stock Hollywood plot, the worthless playboy metamorphised into a hero by becoming an army flier. In this case he flys with the R. A. F. The portion of the picture in which two Americans participate in the bombing of Berlin is exciting and interesting. Photography is effective with unusually good shots of the planes and their crews in action.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

FLYING TIGERS ◇ ◇

John Wayne, John Carroll, Anna Lee, Paul Kelly, Gordon Jones, Mae Clark, Addison Richards, Edmunds MacDonald. Screen play by Kenneth Gamet and Barry Trivers from original story by Kenneth Gamet. Direction by David Miller. Republic.

(Filmed with cooperation of U. S. Army Air Corps and augmented by shots from confiscated Japanese reels.)

This film is a tribute to the work of the American Volunteer Group who aided in the defense of China. It gives a graphic impression of the type of men who, outnumbered and ill equipped, fought, without regard for the uneven odds, against an enemy who had no pity even for defenseless Chinese civilians. With such a theme it is unfortunate that the personal story follows a trite formula, but the acting makes the characters believable. They are men with human frailties, adventurers who one by one sacrifice personal ambitions for a great ideal. The picture is realistic and unpretentious, and it brings the contribution of the Flying Tigers vividly before us.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Some shocking scenes of death and destruction

THE FOREST RANGERS ◇ ◇

Don Stuart, Paulette Goddard, Susan Hayward, Lynne Overman, Albert Dekker, Eugene Pallette, Regis Toomey, Rod Cameron, Clem Bevans, James Brown. Adapted from the novel, "Fire by Night," by Thelma Strabel. Direction by George Marshall. Paramount.

With beautiful Technicolor photography of giant trees, thrilling melodramatic action, and a trivial story, *"The Forest Rangers"* adds up to fair entertainment. If it had used the opportunity of presenting the ranger service in a more inspiring story, it would have been more interesting. Most of the plot is devoted to the blunders of a city girl who marries a Ranger and goes to live at his post in the forest. There she meets with competition from a rugged, out-door girl who has had her eye on the bridegroom before his marriage and seems unable to relinquish him. The stress is about equally divided between comedy and hair-raising escapes from forest fires.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Too exciting

❖

FOR ME AND MY GAL ◇ ◇

Judy Garland, George Murphy, Gene Kelly, Marta Eggerth, Ben Blue, Horace McNally, Richard Quine, Lucile Norman, Keenan Wynn. Screen play by Richard Sherman, Fred Finklehoffe and Sid Silvers, from an original story by Howard Emmett Rogers. Musical direction by Georgie Stoll. Dance direction by Bobby Connolly. Direction by Busby Berkeley. Produced by Arthur Freed. M-G-M.

The story of this musical drama is trite and runs the gamut from tears to laughter, but the youthful cast redeem it by excellent performances. It is a re-creation of the past, of a time when vaudeville was in its heyday, and it shows quite definitely the *morale* value of entertainers on the war front in 1918.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 If interested

❖

GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE ◇

Jack Benny, Ann Sheridan, Charles Coburn, Percy Kilbride, Hattie McDaniel, William Tracy, Joyce Reynolds, Lee Patrick, Charles Dingle, John Emery, Douglas Croft, Harvey Stephens, Franklin Pangborn. Screen play by Everett Freeman. From stage play by Moss Hart and George Kaufman. Direction by William Keighley. Produced by Jerry Wald. Warner Bros.

When a confirmed apartment house dweller, addicted to modern conveniences, has a wife for whom historical antiques have a fatal attraction, something is bound to happen. It does. *Mrs. Fuller* buys a country house, the only asset of which seems to be the legend, "George Washington slept here." The rude shocks which come to the couple are taken in stride by *Mr. Fuller* who displays an urban consternation followed by resignation which, under the circumstances, is very

funny. The film is more slapstick than the stage play, but the exaggerations make it only the more amusing to anyone who has ever had the experience of trying to return to "simple country living."

The cast is excellent, with Percy Kilbride, as the lugubrious caretaker, adding much to the hilarity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

❖

GET HEP TO LOVE ◇ ◇

Gloria Jean, Jane Frazee, Robert Paige, Cora Sue Collins, Donald O'Connor, Nana Bryant, Peggy Ryan, Edith Barrett, Douglas Scott, Millard Mitchell. Direction by Charles Lamont. Produced by Bernard Burton. Universal.

The title belies the good qualities of this picture which sets forth a pleasantly homespun story against the wholesome backgrounds of small town, school, and home. Gloria Jean plays the role of *Doris,* a talented young singer, whose ambitious aunt trys to exploit her. *Doris* runs away and finds a happy, normal home. The old theme is pleasingly developed and will appeal to audiences of all ages.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good — **Children, 8 to 12** Good

❖

GIRL TROUBLE ◇ ◇

Don Ameche, Joan Bennett, Billie Burke, Frank Craven, Alan Dinehart, Helene Reynolds, Fortunio Bonanova, Ted North, Doris Merrick, Dale Evans, Roseanne Murray, Janis Carter, Vivian Blaine, Trudy Marshall. Direction by Harold Schuster. Produced by Robert Bassler. Twentieth Century-Fox.

In this lightweight farce comedy, Don Ameche plays the part of a South American visitor in New York, whose supposed wealth makes him the target for romance. Joan Bennett is cast as a suddenly impoverished heiress who pretends to be a housemaid, and Billie Burke plays another of her familiar twitter-pated roles. The plot is trivial but sufficient to support a number of amusing incidents.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes — **Children, 8 to 12** No interest

✤

GIVE OUT, SISTERS ◇ ◇

The Andrews Sisters, Grace McDonald, Dan Dailey, Jr., William Frawley, Richard Davies, Charles Butterworth, Walter Catlett, Donald O'Connor, Peggy Ryan, Marie Blake, Edith Barrett, Fay Helm, Emmett Vogan, Leonard Kerry. Direction by Edward F. Cline. Universal Pictures.

A night club, about to fold up for lack of patronage, is saved by a dancing school which puts on jitterbug acts. The Andrews Sisters croon and the dancers "swing it" vigorously. Those who enjoy this sort of entertainment will not be disappointed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste — **Children, 8 to 12** Little interest

THE GLASS KEY ◇ ◇

Brian Donlevy, Veronica Lake, Alan Ladd, Bonita Granville, Richard Denning, Joseph Calleia, William Bendix, Frances Gifford, Donald McBride, Margaret Hayes, Moroni Olson, Eddie Marr. Screen play by Jonathan Latimer, based on the novel by Dashiell Hammett. Direction by Stuart Heisler. Paramount.

Competent acting especially by Alan Ladd and Brian Donlevy, and a well-written script, keep the audience alert. The story is unsavory. Ethical values are cancelled out when an underworld leader and political boss backs a reform candidate and the reformer discovers that his own son has become enmeshed in the double-dealings of gamblers and racketeers. The treatment is often forceful but as in most gangster films, it is carried to the point of brutality.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Makes crime too attractive — **Children, 8 to 12** Very undesirable

✤

THE HARD WAY ◇ ◇

Ida Lupino, Dennis Morgan, Joan Leslie, Jack Carson, Gladys George, Paul Cavanaugh, Faye Emerson, Leona Maricle, Roman Bohnen. Direction by Vincent Sherman. Produced by Jerry Wald. Warner Bros.

Doubtless the reason that problem melodramas keep on rearing their ugly heads is that people like them. Here is one that runs true to form. It begins with a suicide and then reviews the life of the victim. It presents a sordid story of two sisters, one of whom, through ruthless ambition, dominates the other's life and almost ruins it. At last, when the weaker sister rebels, the other one kills herself. The film has emotional appeal and excellent character delineation, but it is not outstanding.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Sordid and depressing — **Children, 8 to 12** No

✤

HENRY ALDRICH, EDITOR ◇ ◇

Jimmy Lydon, Charles Smith, John Litel, Olive Blakeney, Rita Quigley, Vaughan Glaser, Charles Halton, Francis Pierlot, Cliff Clark, Bennie Bartlett. Original screen play by Muriel Roy Bolton and Val Burton. Direction by Hugh Bennett. Paramount.

As is the case with several popular radio programs, the adventures of *Henry Aldrich* are better heard over the air than shown on the screen. Possibly the exaggerations are more noticeable when one sees as well as hears what is going on, but whatever the reason, "Henry Aldrich, Editor," is only a mediocre picture.

In an effort to pep up a high school paper, *Henry* writes a faked account of a fire, and thereby gets himself into trouble. In the end, however, he manages to track down the town pyromaniac.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair — **Children, 8 to 12** Fair

I MARRIED A WITCH ◇ ◇

Fredric March, Veronica Lake, Robert Benchley, Susan Hayward, Cecil Kellaway, Elizabeth Patterson, Robert Warwick, Eily Malyon. Screen play by Robert Pirosh and Marc Connelly, suggested by a story by Thorne Smith, completed by Norman Matson. Direction by Rene Clair. Produced by Rene Clair. United Artists.

The first shock of surprise in viewing this picture is the realization that the man and woman burned at the stake by Puritan forefathers in 1690, were not innocent victims of Puritan bigotry but actually a sorcerer and his wicked witch daughter. As the film progresses, one is entirely in sympathy with *Jonathan Wooley* who planted an oak tree over their ashes hoping to imprison them forever.

Thorne Smith's fantasies with the light absurdities of his writings are difficult to translate to the screen. On the other hand the technical advantages of the film medium make many scenes funnier by means of special effects. Some may question the casting of Fredric March in the role of the bewildered, frustrated *Wallace Wooley*. His talents would seem best expressed in straight drama. Veronica Lake certainly creates a deliciously uninhibited witch, and Cecil Kellaway is excellent as her wicked, bibulous parent. The picture has a number of comical and sophisticated scenes which Rene Clair has directed with complete comprehension of all the gay and whimsical possibilities of bedroom farce.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Sophisticated

Children, 8 to 12
No, confusing

❖

JOURNEY FOR MARGARET ◇ ◇

Robert Young, Laraine Day, Fay Bainter, Nigel Bruce, Margaret O'Brien, William Severn, Signe Hasso, Elizabeth Risdon, Doris Lloyd, Halliwell Hobbes, Heather Thatcher, Jill Esmond, G. P. Huntley, Jr., Lisa Gohn. Screen play by David Hertz and William Ludwig, based on book by William L. White. Direction by Major W. S. Van Dyke II. Produced by B. P. Fineman. M-G-M.

This is a moving story of the emotional readjustments of two children who have been orphaned during the terrible days of the 1940 blitz over London and of the children's influence on a foreign correspondent and his wife who have seen so much tragedy, that they have assumed an impersonal attitude toward its victims. The film is beautifully acted particularly by young Margaret O'Brein as *Margaret;* William Severn, as winsome little *Peter;* Fay Bainter as the understanding matron of a children's refuge; and Robert Young as the correspondent who through the children's dependence upon him regains his normal view of responsibility.

It is not an escapist picture because in showing children as war victims it shows the most inhuman side of man-made conflict. It illustrates the need for wise, unemotional care in handling these children and the rich reward given in return. But it is also entertaining, for the children's dialogue is very amusing and the humor is delightful. It ends with a promise that some day the lights of the world will go on again, "and when they do, not anyone will put them out."

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Yes, they will understand the children

Children, 8 to 12
No, brings war too close

✤

JUST OFF BROADWAY ◇ ◇

Lloyd Nolan, Marjorie Weaver, Phil Silvers, Janis Carter, Richard Derr, Joan Valerie, Don Costello, Chester Clute, Francis Pierlot, Grant Richards. Screen play by Arnaud d'Usseau, based on an idea by Jo Eisinger and the character created by Brett Halliday. Direction by Herbert I. Leeds. Produced by Sol Wurtzel. Twentieth Century-Fox.

This is a typical *Michael Shayne* murder mystery. The excitement begins in a courtroom scene when one of the witnesses is killed by a knife, hurled through the air. *Shayne* is a member of the jury, locked up for the night in a hotel. After plying his roommate with dope, he sneaks down the fire escape to meet a girl reporter who helps him solve the crime and free the innocent. Lloyd Nolan and Marjorie Weaver do their best to enliven a run of the mill mystery.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Fairly entertaining

Children, 8 to 12
No

✤

THE MAJOR AND THE MINOR ◇ ◇

Ginger Rogers, Ray Milland, Rita Johnson, Robert Benchley, Diana Lynn, Edward Fielding, Frankie Thomas, Raymond Roe, Charles Smith, Larry Nunn, Billy Dawson, Lela Rogers. Suggested by a play by Edward Childs Carpenter and a story by Fannie Kilbourne. Music score by Robert Emmett Dolan. Produced by Arthur Hornblow, Jr. Direction by Billy Wilder. Paramount.

For a couple of hours of relief from the cares of the world, for chuckles and openhearted laughter, we recommend Ginger Rogers and Ray Milland in a slightly improbable, but highly diverting, comedy. *Susan Applegate,* beset by flirtacious males, tires of earning her living in New York, but finds she has only enough money for a half fare ticket home. By passing herself off as a child of eleven she succeeds in boarding the train. To escape detection she plays on the sympathy of *Major Kirby,* an instructor in a military school, who takes her to the academy for a brief visit. While there she raises havoc among the cadets who one by one try

to make love to her. Evenutally *Kirby's* fiancee suspects that *Susan* is not as young as she pretends to be, and there are more complications. The academy makes an interesting and attractive background for the tale, and seldom have Gingen Rogers and Ray Milland played in better comedy form.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Amusing

Children, 8 to 12 Most of the comedy too old for them

❖

MANILA CALLING ◇ ◇

Lloyd Nolan, Carole Landis, Cornel Wilde, James Gleason, Martin Kosleck, Ralph Byrd, Charles Tannen, Ted North, Elisha Cook, Jr., Harold Huber. Original screen play by John Larkin. Direction by Herbert I. Leeds. Produced by Sol M. Wurtzel. Twentieth Century-Fox.

The plight of civilians stranded in the Philippines and surrounded by the enemy is melodramatically shown in this film which seems to be concerned particularly with stressing the diabolical cruelty of the Japanese. It is fairly well acted but lacks the inspirational quality of many war pictures probably because it depicts a group of people who, though individually heroic, seem unable to submerge their selfish interests to a common cause.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Depressing

Children, 8 to 12 Too brutal

❖

THE MAN IN THE TRUNK ◇ ◇

Lynne Roberts, George Holmes, Raymond Walburn, J. Carrol Naish, Dorothy Peterson, Eily Malyon, Arthur Loft, Milton Parsons, Matt McHugh, Charles Cane, Theodore von Eltz, Joan Marsh, Syd Saylor, Douglas Fowley. Direction by Malcolm St. Clair. Produced by Walter Morosco. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Raymond Walburn as a lively ghost finds keen enjoyment in helping to identify his murderer. In spite of a capable cast, comedy possibilities of the situations are only partially realized and the picture as a whole is not worth seeing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not worth recommending

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE MOON AND SIXPENCE ◇ ◇

George Sanders, Herbert Marshall, Steve Geray, Doris Dudley, Albert Basserman, Eric Blore, Molly Lamont, Elena Verdugo, Florence Bates, Heather Thatcher, Robert Grieg, Kenneth Hunter. From the book by W. Somerset Maugham. Direction by Albert Lewin. Produced by Loew-Lewin.

Maugham's novel follows in large measure the life of the painter, Paul Gauguin. *Strickland* in the story considers all who come in contact with him subservient to the expression of his genius. Desertion of wife and children, treachery to a friend who has saved his life, brutal treatment of a woman who sacrifices all conventions for him are unimportant; the only thing that matters is his desire to create beauty. Some may feel that the subject is too definitely a psychological study to be as successful in the more concrete medium of motion pcitures as it is in written form; others will find it satisfying. Certainly George Sanders imparts a vital quality to the rather bizarre figure of the artist, and the men portrayed by Herbert Marshall and Steve Geray are almost equally well done. The story is related effectively by the flashback method, and photography is notable as it shifts from ordinary tones in the scenes of London and Paris to sepias in the Tahitian sequences, and flowers into strong colors to picture the murals *Strickland* painted on the walls of a native hut. These murals remain to earn posthumous fame for him. As in most of Maugham's writing the point of view is cynical, worldly.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Needs mature evaluation

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

MOONLIGHT IN HAVANA ◇ ◇

Allan Jones, Jane Frazee, Wm. Frawley, Marjorie Lord, Wade Boteler, Don Terry, Sergei Orta, Gus Schilling. Direction by Anthony Mann. Produced by Bernard Burton. Universal.

In this comedy with musical interludes, Allan Jones is cast as *Whizzer Norton,* a professional baseball player. *Whizzer* can also sing, but only when he has a cold. Between catching colds in order to sing and getting rid of them in order to play ball, he has a strenuous time, but he manages by employing both arts, to earn a living and to marry his singing partner. Except for the music the picture offers pretty feeble entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Harmless

Children, 8 to 12 Boring

❖

MRS. WIGGS OF THE CABBAGE PATCH

Moroni Olsen, Carl Switzer, Mary Thomas, Billy Lee, Betty Farrington, Ethel Griffies, Janet Beecher, Fay Bainter, Carolyn Lee, Hugh Herbert, Vera Vague, John Archer, Barbara Britton, Betty Brewer. Based on the novel by Alice Hegan Rice and the play by Anne Crawford Flexner. Direction by Ralph Murphy. Paramount.

"Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," like the pie that Mother used to make, is wrapped in such a cloud of sentimental memories that its faults are easily forgotten or forgiven by those who are loyal to the past.

Fay Bainter is an ideal *Mrs. Wiggs,* whose wholesome philosophy permeates the whole story. The effervescent children in the cast are delightfully natural. The comedy and the human appeal overshadow the sordid elements in the plot, but the deviations from the stage play are not an improvement, and some of the comedy sequences are not in the best taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

MY SISTER EILEEN ◇ ◇

Rosalind Russell, Brian Aherne, Janet Blair, George Tobias, Allyn Joslyn, Elizabeth Patterson, Grant Mitchell, Richard Quine, June Havoc, Donald MacBride, Gordon Jones, Jeff Donnell, Minna Phillips, Frank Sully, Charles La Torre. Screen play by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov, based on play by Fields and Chodorov adapted from stories by Ruth McKenney. Direction by Alexander Hall. Produced by Max Gordon. Columbia Pictures.

The wacky adventures of two mid-west sisters in search of careers in New York are as amusing on the screen as on the stage. The girls' apartment in Greenwich Village is about as private as a gold fish bowl. It has a past which they discover to their amazed discomfort, and *Eileen's* undesigning, but none the less fatal, charm for men adds to the domestic complications. An excellent cast, smart direction, and sophisticated dialogue put over the hilarious absurdities.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes, slapstick relieves sophistication

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature

❖

THE NAVY COMES THROUGH ◇ ◇

Pat O'Brien, George Murphy, Jane Wyatt, Jackie Cooper, Carl Esmond, Max Baer, Desi Arnaz, Ray Collins, Lee Donnell, Frank Jenks, John Maguire, Frank Fenton. Screen play by Roy Chanslor and Aeneas MacKenzie. Adaptation by Earl Baldwin and John Swist. Based on the Saturday Evening Post Story "Pay to Learn" by Borden Chase. Direction by A. Edward Sutherland. Produced by Islin Auster. RKO-Radio Pictures, Inc.

The heroic performance of Navy gun crews aboard merchant marine convoy vessels is a phase of war that may well be emphasized in more than one film. Here the subject is inspiringly treated. The plot is subordinated to the battle action, and, although some interest is developed in the personal problems of the characters, the picture is outstanding chiefly for the vivid impression it leaves of a battle at sea and the bravery and resourcefulness of the men. It is interesting to note that the technical advisor is a Navy man, Captain James A. Randall, U. S. N. Retired.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Exciting

❖

NIGHTMARE ◇ ◇

Diana Barrymore, Brian Donlevy, Henry Daniell, Eustace Wyatt, Arthur Shields, Gavin Muir, Stanley Logan, Ian Wolf, Hans Conried, John Abbott, David Clyde, Elspeth Dudgeon, Harold de Becker. Writer-producer Dwight Taylor. Direction by Tim Whelan. Universal Pictures.

When the audience is introduced to a man dressed in evening clothes and idly walking in the rain through London's bombed streets, its curiosity is at once aroused. And then, when the man manages to enter a house where he obviously has no right, the stage is set for a mystery, the details of which justify the title "Nightmare." The plot is ingeniously devised with interesting local color to distinguish it. The cast is good although, as in most stories of its type, action, rather than character delineation, is emphasized.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Mature, not advised for younger children

❖

NORTHWEST RANGERS ◇ ◇

James Craig, William Lundigan, Patricia Dane, John Carradine, Jack Holt, Keenan Wynn, Grant Withers, Darryl Hickman, Drew Roddy. Direction by Joe Newman. Produced by Samuel Marx. M-G-M.

That a "Mountie" always gets his man is demonstrated once again in "Northwest Rangers." The film, in plot and direction, is typical of an outmoded pattern and will have little interest for today's audience. Two small boys, *Blackie* and *Jim*, orphaned in an Indian raid are given a home by a member of the Mounted Police but *Blackie* has the gambling fever and runs away to return years later as the flashy owner of the town's gambling center. When *Blackie* shoots a man, *Jim* who has grown up to become a Mountie, has the unwelcome duty of tracking down his former chum. Love interest is introduced in the form of an improbably naive dance hall girl who transfers her affection from *Blackie* to *Jim*. There is too little outdoor action to make the film an interesting one for the "western" fans and the story is too stilted to appeal to mature audiences.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Ethically confusing

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THE OMAHA TRAIL ◇ ◇

James Craig, Dean Jagger, Pamela Blake, Edward Ellis, Chill Wills, Donald Meek, Howard da Silva, Henry Morgan, Morris Ankrum. Screen play by Jesse Lasky, Jr., and Hugo Butler, from an original story by Jesse Lasky, Jr. Direction by Edward Buzzell. Produced by Jack Chertok. M-G-M.

The plot of this pioneer tale had possibilities. The film tells a story of hauling freight overland by oxen and of outwitting the Indians who attack a wagon loaded with a steam engine. But it is poorly directed, brutal in spots, and as it is presented, lacks suspense and interest. Even the cast and the good photography of mountain scenery do not make it worth seeing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Dull

Children, 8 to 12 Dull

ONCE UPON A HONEYMOON ◇ ◇

Ginger Rogers, Cary Grant, Walter Slezak, Albert Dekker, Albert Basserman, Ferike Boros, Harry Shannon, Natasha Lytess. Screen play by Sheridan Gibney from a story by Sheridan Gibney and Leo McCarey. Music by Robert Emmett Dolan. Photography by George Barnes, A.S.C. Direction and production by Leo McCarey. RKO.

Although the action of this film is set against the gloomy background of a Europe, torn and distraught by the forces of Nazi agression, "Once Upon a Honeymoon" is three-quarters spontaneous, irresistible comedy. It is the story of a Brooklyn-born, strip tease dancer who has married a baron. An American war correspondent becomes interested in the couple from a news angle and soon uncovers the fact that the Baron is actually another Quisling. As the panorama of war unfolds the girl gradually changes from the bejeweled, over-dressed, false accented little social climber to a straight thinking American patriot.

The picture is handled with a fine sense of balance and emphasis. It is a smooth blending of expert clowning and trenchant satire, and it also functions as an entertaining escape from reality.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12
Too mature, would give erroneous ideas

◆

ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT IS MISSING ◇

Godfrey Tearle, Eric Portman, Hugh Williams, Bernard Miles, Hugh Burden, Emrys Jones, Pamela Brown, Hay Petrie, Roland Culver, David Ward, Georgie Withers, David Evand. Story by British National-Archers. Alexander Korda Release.

The sad, laconic, and too familiar statement "One of our aircraft is missing," which so frequently follows flights over enemy occupied territory, is dramatized in this story of the escape of an English bombing crew who have parachuted to earth in Holland. Their return to England is accomplished by the help of loyal Dutch patriots who later pay with their lives for their "disloyalty" to their German rulers. The story seems less fabricated for excitement than some American films on similar subjects. The cast, too, lack the accepted Hollywood glamour, and this adds to reality. The film, set in a foreign locale and beautifully photographed, is most interesting. Probably no films can exaggerate the real drama which our allied fighters live daily, especially the miraculous return of downed airmen listed as "missing." They can only encourage us in the belief that courage, loyalty and decency will eventually win out.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Good

Children, 8 to 12
Very tense

THE PALM BEACH STORY ◇ ◇

Claudette Colbert, Joel McCrea, Mary Astor, Rudy Vallee, Sig Arno, Robert Warwick, Arthur Stewart Hull, Torben Heyer, Jimmy Conlin, Victor Potel. Screen story by Preston Sturges. Direction by Preston Sturges. Paramount.

In "The Palm Beach Story," a good cast, under the skilful direction of Preston Sturges, puts over an absurdly impossible comedy with a mixture of sophistication, slapstick, and rowdyism that will prove highly entertaining to a great many people. On the other hand, anyone who is at all concerned about the impression of American life that films of this sort are likely to convey to our foreign allies may be a little irked by seeing another comedy built around marital misunderstandings, extravagant living, and excessive drinking.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
No

Children, 8 to 12
No

❖

ROAD TO MOROCCO ◇ ◇

Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, Anthony Quinn, Dona Drake, Mikhail Rasumny, Vladimir Sokoloff, George Givot, Andrew Tombes, Leon Belasco. Original screen play by Frank Butler and Don Hartman. Direction by David Butler. Paramount.

The names of Crosby, Hope and Lamour heading the cast of a "Road to ———" picture have come to be a pretty reliable guarantee of hilarious lunacy, lavish settings, catchy music, and quotable wisecracks. There may be dull moments in this film but there is so much to look at and laugh at that only a very determined pessimist could come away in a bad mood.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12
Harmless

❖

SEVEN DAYS LEAVE ◇ ◇

Victor Mature, Lucille Ball, Harold Peary, Mapy Cortes, Ginny Simms, Marcy McGuire, Peter Lind Hayes, Walter Reed, Wallace Ford, Arnold Stang, Buddy Clark, Charles Victor, King Kennedy, Charles Andre, Harry Holman, Addison Richads, Freddy Martin and his orchestra, Les Brown and his orchestra, Radio programs "Court of Missing Heirs" and "Truth or Consequences," Lynn, Royce and Vanya. Direction by Tim Whelan. Produced by Tim Whelan. RKO-Radio.

"Seven Days Leave" is a sprightly musical comedy with some particularly funny episodes. It tells the story of a rookie who learns through a radio program that he is a "missing heir." But there is a catch in his luck, for he discovers that he must marry a girl who proves antagonistic to the idea. Thus, with a musical background provided by the bands of Freddy Martin and Les Brown, begins a whirlwind courtship. A number of good specialty acts are introduced, and the entire cast adds to the fun.

Adolescents, 12 to 16
Good

Children, 8 to 12
If interested

SCATTERGOOD SURVIVES A MURDER

Guy Kibbee, John Archer, Margaret Hayes, Willie Best, Wallace Ford, George Chandler, John Miljan, Frank Reicher, Spencer Charters, Florence Lake. Direction by Christy Cabanne. Produced by Jerrold T. Brandt. Pyramid-RKO.

Radio listeners who enjoy *Scattergood Baines* will perhaps be entertained by this movie version of his activities in apprehending the murderer of two eccentric old ladies. Comedy and human interest material are combined with homey philosophy. The medium of the screen may be responsible for making the story seem rather more farfetched than the radio episodes.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes **Children, 8 to 12** Yes

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE VOICE OF TERROR ◇ ◇

Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, Evelyn Ankers, Reginald Denny, Thomas Gomez, Henry Daniell, Montagu Love, Olaf Hytten, Leyland Hodgson. Original story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Screen play by Lynn Riggs andJohn Bright. Direction by John Rawlins. Universal.

This is an interesting attempt to bring our old friend, *Sherlock Holmes,* up to date and to prove that his deductive processes function in a world of scientific innovations. With his devoted *Watson* he is called in to solve the riddle of how a Nazi radio announcer can predict acts of sabotage in England within a few seconds of their actual occurrence. This is of course very different from other *Sherlock Holmes* pictures. It is fantastic but on the whole entertaining.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 They would probably enjoy it **Children, 8 to 12** Too exciting

SIN TOWN ◇ ◇

Constance Bennett, Patric Knowles, Brod Crawford, Anne Gwynne, Andy Devine, Leo Carrillo, Ralf Harolde, Ward Bond. Direction by Ray Enright. Universal.

"Sin Town," being a melodrama with a boom oil town as background, necessarily reflects this unwholesome atmosphere with its shooting, drinking, gambling and general lawlessness. It also has the color and excitement. The story is mostly concerned with the character of *Dude McNair* who, in spite of a magnificent physique, magnetic charm and eloquent tongue, cannot bear to earn an honest living and is happy only when putting over some slick scheme. His charm is such that *"Kye"* follows him faithfully in spite of his uncertain life and wandering eye. In Carsin Town he almost goes "legitimate," organizing the gambling in some semblance of straightness and falling for the feminine leader of the better elements. However, his fate runs true to form and he barely escapes from the town with his life, no money, and the faithful *Kye.* The parts are well played but the production is just another addition to the boom town cycle.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended **Children, 8 to 12** No

SPRINGTIME IN THE ROCKIES ◇ ◇

Betty Grable, John Payne, Carmen Miranda, Harry James and His Music Makers, Cesar Romero, Charlotte Greenwood, Edward Everett Horton, Frank Orth, Jackie Gleason, Harry Hayden, Chick Chandler. Screen play by Walter Bullock and Ken Englund, based on story by Philip Wylie. Musical direction by Alfred Newman. Dances staged by Hermes Pan. Photographed in Technicolor. Direction by Irving Cummings. Produced by William LeBaron. Twentieth Century-Fox.

A slight change in plot, a new setting, a different leading man or woman, and a popular band, and here we have another musical comedy cut after a pattern long successful at 20th Century-Fox. This one is gay and tuneful, with pretty dances, filmed in brilliant Technicolor and a large cast of popular entertainers. It furnishes a pleasant respite from all problems more serious than whether or not boy gets girl in the last reel.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** If interested

STREET OF CHANCE ◇ ◇

Burgess Meredith, Claire Trevor, Louise Platt, Sheldon Leonard, Frieda Inescort, Jerome Cowan, Adeline de Walt Reynolds. Screen play by Garrett Ford. Based on a story by Cornell Woolrich. Direction by Jack Hively. Music score by David Buttolph. Paramount.

"Street of Chance" is disappointing because it starts out to be something extraordinary and then fails to rise to expectations. The hero is affected with amnesia and for a long time the audience is carried along with him in the same mood, discovering faces and rooms that arouse a vague memory, groping step by step for a realization of actuality. The unusual sensitivity of Burgess Meredith's acting is responsible for this in combination with subtle suggestions used by the director. At a certain point, however, the picture shifts into rather commonplace mystery melodrama.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Of doubtful interest **Children, 8 to 12** Too mature

THAT OTHER WOMAN ◇ ◇

Virginia Gilmore, James Ellison, Dan Duryea, Janis Carter, Alma Kruger, Bud McCallister, Minerva Urecal, Charles Arnt, Charles Halton, Charles Trowbridge, Frank Pershing, George Melford, Paul Fix, Syd Saylor. Screen play by Jack Jungmeyer, Jr. Direction by Ray McCarey. Produced by Walter Morosco. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Except that girl chases man into the field of matrimony, the plot of this screwball farce differs little from those of other recent productions of this type which have seemed to catch public fancy. Possibly a stellar cast

could have made the ethics and behavior of all concerned more acceptable, for when conventions are thrown to the wind one prefers to feel certain that it is at least intended to be all in the spirit of nonsense. A secretary is in love with her boss although he is a vain and incurable woman chaser. *Grandma* helps her set a snare for him which works at last.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

THUNDERBIRDS (Soldiers of the Air) ◇

Gene Tierney, Preston Foster, John Sutton, Jack Holt, Dame May Whitty, George Barbier, Richard Haydn, Reginald Denny, Ted North, Janis Carter, Archie Got, Lawrence Ung, Montague Shaw, Nana Bryant, Iris Adrian, Viola Moore, Billy McGuire, Richard Woodruff. Original story by Melville Crossman. Screen play by Lamar Trotti. Special commentary by John Gunther. Photographed in Technicolor. Direction by William Wellman. Produced by Lamar Trotti. Twentieth Century-Fox.

Because of its beautiful Technicolor photography and its descriptive account of the instruction at Thunder Bird Field near Phoenix, Arizona, where Chinese cadets and Britishers are trained along with the American flyers, the film is well worth seeing. It would be a better picture if it lived up to the expectations created by John Gunther's excellent introduction and revealed more of the day-to-day life of the air base with its international atmosphere. The plot seems lacking in vitality. Two men, one an instructor, veteran of the first World War, and the other a young Englishman, indulge in a gentlemanly contest for a girl, and their roles are played with such restraint that the outcome of the rivalry evokes little emotional response from the audience.

The views of the actual training (maneuvers, acrobatics, and formation flying) are fascinating; and there is always the stunning background of Arizona with the brilliant blues and gold of sky and desert, the snowy, towering clouds and the amethyst haze of the mountains.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting
Children, 8 to 12 Love story, probably boring

◆

WHITE CARGO ◇ ◇

Hedy Lamarr, Walter Pidgeon, Frank Morgan, Richard Carlson, Reginald Owen, Henry O'Neill, Bramwell Fletcher, Clyde Cook, Leigh Whipper, Oscar Polk, Darby Jones, Richard Ainley. From stage play by Leon Gordon, based on novel "Hell's Playground" by Ida Vera Simonton. Direction by Richard Thorpe. Produced by Victor Saville. M-G-M.

There will be differences of opinion as to whether or not this lurid drama of the South Seas was worth the effort expended in putting it on the screen. It is the same old story of white men on a rubber plantation going to pieces from the heat and loneliness and the baleful influence of an uninhibited woman of the tropics. The cast is good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No
Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

WHO DONE IT? ◇ ◇

Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Patric Knowles, Louise Allbritton, Don Porter, Mary Wickes, William Gargan, William Bendix, Jerome Cowan, Thomas Gomez. Direction by Erle C. Kenton. Universal.

Abbott and Costello, in various absurd disguises, take part in solving a murder mystery. Their comic mannerisms and stock gags do not seem quite so funny as usual and to those who have enjoyed them in the past, this latest picture may be disappointing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Harmless
Children, 8 to 12 Harmless

❖

THE WORLD AT WAR ◇ ◇

Produced by the United States Government, Office of War Information, from material gathered from the archives of the United States Government and from the confiscated films of the German, Italian and Japanese powers.

Although some parts of this documentary are weakened because they have become too familiar, it is in the main a well-selected and effectively presented series of events. The editing is notable, as are the wording and presentation of the narration. Very graphically is shown the constant march of conquest, symbolized by frequent shots of soldiers marching to battle at the commands of Hirohito, Mussolini, and Hitler. Exceptionally interesting are close-ups, personal shots of ordinary soldiers of all of the countries involved, as well as similar pictures of the leaders, one of the most revealing being the obvious glee shown by Hitler after the signing of the armistice with France. There are many good shots of modern mechanized warfare, of course, and many very subtle but dramatically powerful scenes such as the people of Russia standing guard during the harvesting of their grain, and then turning en masse to digging ditches for tank traps. All together, the scenes add up to an exciting recital of the events that led up to Pearl Harbor, giving the definite impression that it was inevitable, though many were too blind to see it.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent
Children, 8 to 12 Very mature

❖

YOU CAN'T ESCAPE FOREVER ◇ ◇

George Brent, Brenda Marshall, Gene Lockhart, Roscoe Karns, E. Cianelli, Paul Harvey, Edith Barrett, Harry Hayden, Charles Halton, Don De Fore. Screen play by Fred Niblo, Jr., and Hector Chevigny, from a story by Roy Chanslor. Direction by Jo. Graham. Warner Bros.

Probably no managing editor of a newspaper ever did so many outrageous things on mere hunches as does *"Mitch" Mitchell* in

this film, or got off with such a light sentence as being made the author of a heart-throb (Prudence Maddox) column. However, that is of slight importance in this breezy, fast-moving newspaper picture which is not very original in its bare outlines but colorful in its embellishments.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Entertaining

Children, 8 to 12 Too much gangster activity

❖

WAR DOGS ◇ ◇

Bill Lee, Addison Richards, Kay Linaker, Bradley Page, Herbert Rawlinson, Lee Phelps, Bryant Washburn, John Berkes, George Neisse, Don Curtis, Hal Price, Steve Clark, and Pal. Screen adaptation by John Vlahos, from story suggested by Ande Lamb. Direction by S. Roy Luby. Monogram Pictures.

Not all American families can be represented at the front, but young *Billy Freeman* (Billy Lee) is particularly distressed since his father though a former Marine and a hero in World War I is physically unfit to re-enlist. However, an important defense job is found for the father while their magnificent dog takes his place at the fighting front. It is a sympathetic and touching story and of particular interest because the training of dogs for combat duty is illustrated in satisfactory detail.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good

Children, 8 to 12 Good

THE YOUNG MR. PITT ◇ ◇

Robert Donat, Geoffrey Atkins, Jean Cadell, Robert Moreley, Phyllis Calvert, Raymond Lovell, Agnes Loughlan, John Mills, Felix Aylmer, Ian McLean, Max Adrian, Bromley Davenport, John Salew, Herbert Lome. Direction by Carol Reed. British-Gaumont Production. Twentieth Century-Fox.

This fine historical drama, a biographical sketch of the life of the English Prime Minister William Pitt, is of particular interest today since it presents a period in history when English national affairs were as dark and seemingly hopeless as they often appear today. There is a marked parallel between Napoleon's plans to conquer all Europe and Hitler's similar ambition; and the English people in Pitt's time desired "Peace in our time" as feverently as others did, at all cost, not so long ago. William Pitt stood for no compromise with the ruthless despot.

The film is marked by exquisite care for detail and by perfection in casting and performances. It is difficult to single out those who deserve special mention, although Robert Donat in the steller role gives an exceptionally brilliant performance. Because the action covers a long period of history, many scenes are of equal importance and there is no great climax. This does not detract from the interest. It is a vivid story of a man whose devotion to a great purpose could not be swerved by any personal claims.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Long and mature

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DECEMBER
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FEATURE FILMS

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American Empire
Among the Living
Andy Hardy's Double Life
Arabian Nights
The Avenger
The Battle of Midway
Behind the Eight Ball
Casablanca
Cat People
China Girl
Confirm or Deny
Dr. Gillespie's New Assistant
Go West, Young Lady
Keep 'Em Flying
Life Begins at 8:30
Little Joe the Wrangler
Lucky Jordan
My Heart Belongs to Daddy
A Night to Remember
Pittsburgh
The Powers Girl
Random Harvest
Rise and Shine
Reunion in France
Seven Miles from Alcatraz
Silver Queen
Stand By for Action
Strictly in the Groove
Tennessee Johnson
The Undying Monster
When Johnny Comes Marching Home
Whistling in Dixie
Wrecking Crew
You Were Never Lovelier

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FEATURE FILMS

AMERICAN EMPIRE ◇ ◇

Richard Dix, Leo Carrillo, Preston Foster, Frances Gifford, Robert Barrat, Jack La Rue, Guinn Williams, Cliff Edwards, Merrill Guy Rodin, Chris Pin Martin, Richard Webb, William Farnum. Direction by William McGann. Producer Harry Sherman. United Artists.

A well-constructed plot, dramatic situations and clearly defined characters raise this film above the usual level of Westerns. The climax, however, seems overlong and repetitious in its protracted and horrifying scenes of men and horses caught in a terrific grass fire. The time of the story is soon after the Civil War. *Dan Taylor* and *Paxton Bryce*, river boat partners, go into the business of cattle raising in Texas and dream of establishing a great American empire of their own. The body of the film is devoted to picturing their clashes with cattle rustlers and to the changing ideologies of the two men as *Bryce* temporarily turns against his partner and, forgetting his obligations to his family and to his neighbors, decides to play a lone hand. The human relations are well portrayed; Frances Gifford as *Taylor's* wife and Merrill Guy Rodin as *Bryce's* young son contribute poignancy to the story.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good of type

Children, 8 to 12 Fire scene too harrowing

AMOND THE LIVING ◇ ◇

Albert Dekker, Susan Hayward, Harry Carey, Frances Farmer, Gordon Jones, Jean Phillips, Ernest Whitman, Maude Eburne, Frank M. Thomas, Harlan Briggs, Archie Twitchell, Dorothy Sebastian, William Stack, Ella Neal, Catherine Craig, Eddy Chandler, Abe Dinovitch, Jack Curtis, Chris Frank, Besse Wade, Delmar Watson, Richard Webb, Mimi Doyle, John Kellogg, Blanche Payson, George Turner, Harry Tenbrook, Ethan Laidlaw, Charles Hamilton, Frank S. Hagney, Lee Shumway, Lane Chandler. Directed by Stuart Heisler. Paramount.

This is a psychological drama which will have a limited audience appeal. It is not satisfactory in all respects but there is fascination in its sustained horror and suspense. It portrays the way in which a man, neither completely crazed nor completely sane, reacts to a world he has been kept out of for some twenty years.

The director has retained the mood consistently and Albert Dekker gives an excellent performance in a dual role.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

ANDY HARDY'S DOUBLE LIFE ◇ ◇

Mickey Rooney, Lewis Stone, Cecilia Parker, Fay Holden, Ann Rutherford, Sara Haden, Esther Williams, Robert Pittard, Bobby Lake, Susan Peters. Directed by George B. Seitz. M.-G.-M.

In this episode of the Hardy series *Andy*

goes to college and hopes to start with "a clean slate," but girl trouble gets him into hot water. The picture is lightly entertaining, but unless new and more vital interest is injected into this series, it is in serious danger of petering out.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes
Children, 8 to 12 Uninteresting

❖

ARABIAN NIGHTS ◇ ◇

Maria Montez, Jon Hall, Sabu, Leif Erikson, Edgar Barrier, Thomas Gomez, Turhan Bey, Billy Gilbert, John Qualen, Shemp Howard. Music Director, Charles Previn; Music by Frank Skinner. Director, John Rawlins. Producer Walter Wanger. Universal.

An Arabian Nights tale and Technicolor are surely made for each other, and the combination of the two in this production is a spectacular triumph. Opulent settings and costumes, beautiful scenery, and the skilful handling of mass scenes present a stunning effect. The plot is derived from the story of the dancing girl, *Scheherazade*, for whose favor two half-brothers scheme to murder each other. The plot development, however, is secondary to the spectacle and is sometimes difficult to follow in detail. The savage cruelty depicted in one or two sequences, particularly in the close-ups of the victim on the cross, might well have been toned down for the comfort of the audience.

The cast is excellent. Marie Montez is an exquisitely lovely *Scheherazade*, and Sabu is ideal as *Ali-ben-Ali* the tumbler and magician who foils the enemies of *Haroun-al-Raschid*. *Aladdin* and *Sinbad* as played by John Qualen and Shemp Howard respectively are comedy characters and are very amusing. As a whole the film is well worth seeing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Very entertaining
Children, 8 to 12 Too many cruelties for sensitive children

❖

THE AVENGERS ◇ ◇

Ralph Richardson, Deborah Kerr, Hugh Williams, Griffith Jones, Francis L. Sullivan, Roland Culver, Finlay Currie, Bernard Miles. Director, Harold French. Paramount.

Interesting because of its Norwegian setting and authentic atmosphere, "The Avengers" is a good, strong propaganda film showing the predicament of loyal patriots in a Nazi occupied country. The plot has to do with the adventures of a British Correspondent in the first days of the infiltration and subsequent occupation of Norway by the Nazis. Action is tense and dramatic and suspense is well sustained.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Interesting
Children, 8 to 12 No

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY ◇ ◇

Photographed by Lieutenant Commander John Ford in color. Dialogue by Henry Fonda, Donald Crisp and Jane Darwell. Released through War Activities Committee. Distributed by Twentieth Century-Fox.

This is a short film, but it sets an historical milestone, for one of our finest directors was present in the midst of a great battle and has caught the bright and deadly pattern of war in the tropics (from several vantage points). The photography is remarkable; it is both magnificent and horrifying, invoking pride in the exploits of the men of our armed forces, reverence for their sacrifices. Scenes are held together by narration, which is simple and dignified when given by the men, mawkishly sentimental when given by Jane Darwell, who injects a false note into an otherwise splendid picture.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Inspiring
Children, 8 to 12 Too realistic

❖

BEHIND THE EIGHT BALL ◇ ◇

Ritz Bros., Carol Bruce, Dick Foran, Grace McDonald, Johnny Downs, Wm. Demarest, Richard Davies, Sonny Dunham and his Band. Director, Edward F. Cline. Producer, Howard Benedict. Universal.

The Ritz Brothers and a group of young vaudeville entertainers stage a lot of nonsense with an old barn as a setting and a murder mystery for thrills. The result is rather feeble entertainment.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Might amuse
Children, 8 to 12 Harmless

❖

CASABLANCA ◇ ◇

Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, S. K. Sakall, Madeleine LeBeau, Dooley Wilson, Joy Page, John Qualen, Leonid Kinskey, Curt Bois. Screen play by Julius J. and Philip G. Epstein and Howard Koch, from a play by Murray Burnett and Joan Alison. Director of photography, Arthur Edeson, A.S.C. Music by Leo Forbstein. Direction by Michale Curtiz. Hal B. Wallis Production. Warner Bros.

With public attention currently centering on Africa, "Casablanca" will probably attract more than ordinary interest, but even without this additional drawing card it would be popular entertainment. The cast is exceptionally well chosen and the locale of French Morocco has long been accepted as the ideal background for fascinating villainy. Timely elements of international intrigue and the passport racket are woven into a romantic love story to make an engrossing plot, and the behavior of each of the various characters is motivated by some interesting idealistic concept. Photography and musical backgrounds are remarkably good.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature
Children, 8 to 12 No

CAT PEOPLE ◇ ◇

Simone Simon, Kent Smith, Tom Conway, Jane Randolph, Jack Holt, Alan Napier, Elizabeth Dunne, Elizabeth Russell. Written by DeWitt Bodeen. Direction by Jacques Tourneur. RKO Radio.

An old legend of Yugoslavia tells of the cat people, the wicked ones who refused to be converted by good King John and retained the ability to change themselves into panthers with the power to tear lovers to shreds. This superstition has such a firm grip on *Irena Dubrovna* that even her residence in modern New York, where she is given the services of a trained psychiatrist, cannot save her from a predestined end. For those who have a taste for horror stories the material is well handled with a sustained mood of suspense and foreboding and excellent use of sound and photographic effects, but there is little relief from the nightmarish atmosphere, no strain of hope to lighten the depressing conclusion.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No. Morbid

Children, 8 to 12 Unfit material

❖

CHINA GIRL ◇ ◇

Gene Tierney, George Montgomery, Victor McLaglen, Lynn Bari, Alan Baxter, Sig Rumann, Myron McCormick, Bobby Blake, Ann Penning, Lal Chand Mehra, Kam Tong. Directed by Henry Hathaway. 20th Century-Fox.

An interesting and seemingly authentic atmosphere of the Orient is the distinguishing asset of "China Girl." The picture is a spy melodrama and is violent and horrible in its scenes of death and destruction. George Montgomery, cast as *Jimmy Williams*, a disreputable American newsreel photographer, gives a strongly defined delineation of a most unpleasant character. Gene Tierney is convincing and charming as *Miss Young*, a high class Chinese girl, through whose influence *Williams* is changed for the better. For many audiences this sort of war picture is an ordeal not willingly to be endured, but it is nevertheless better than average of its kind.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

CONFIRM OR DENY ◇ ◇

Don Ameche, Joan Bennett, Roddy McDowall, John Loder, Raymond Walburn, Arthur Shields, Eric Blore, Helene Reynolds, Claude Allister, Roseanne Murray, Stuart Robertson, Queenie Leonard, Jean Prescott, Alan Napier, Billy Bevan, Lumsden Hare, Dennis Hoey, Leonard Carey. Directed by Archie Mayo. 20th Century-Fox.

Packed with noise of flying rubble, the drone of airplanes, bursting shells, and moaning banshees, "Confirm or Deny" is a picture of London during the German invasion of September, 1940. There are interesting scenes of air raid shelters and of business establishments carrying on in the midst of wreckage. Some very terrible things happen and some of the most appealing people die, but through it all sails Don Ameche as the European representative of a big U. S. news agency with the aggressiveness of ten go-getters, and he also has time for a flourishing love affair with a very pretty teletype operator, Joan Bennett. Minor parts are well taken, notably by John Loder and Roddy McDowell. The latter leaves an impression of imperishable boyhood. There is never a dull moment, but so much of the film is carried out in a rollicking manner that it is difficult to give full credence to the dangers and tragedy of the situation.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 No

❖

DR. GILLESPIE'S NEW ASSISTANT ◇ ◇

Lionel Barrymore, Van Johnson, Susan Peters, Richard Quine, Keye Luke, Alma Kruger,, Nat Pendleton, Horace McNally, Frank Orth, Walter Kingsford, Nell Craig. Director, Willis Goldbeck. M.-G.-M.

This chapter of *Dr. Gillespie's* adventures in alleviating human distress is weakened by the introduction of superfluous characters and problems. The main theme in itself has so many ramifications that it can scarcely be adequately dealt with in a film of this kind. The dialogue, however, is good, as usual, and the cast gives a smooth performance. *Dr. Gillespie*, provided with three young assistants, assigns each one to a case. *Dr. Adams* is assigned to the case of a bride who fakes amnesia on her honeymoon in order to free her new husband without disillusioning him by having to tell him of her previous marriage and her child. *Dr. Gillespie* penetrates the fake, and another doctor's file, illegally obtained by *Dr. Adams*, provides the means of reuniting the couple.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Adult problems

Children, 8 to 12 No

♣

GO WEST, YOUNG LADY ◇ ◇

Penny Singleton, Glenn Ford, Ann Miller, Charlie Ruggles, Allen Jenkins, Jed Prouty, Onslow Stevens, Bob Wills, Edith Meiser, Bill Hazlet, The Foursome and Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys. Directed by Frank S. Strayer. Columbia.

Penny Singleton as *Belinda Pendergast*, a recent graduate of a female seminary in the '60's, comes to visit her uncle "Out West." Uncle runs the local gambling house and *Belinda* takes up housekeeping over the saloon. The good ladies of the settlement shun her, a dance hall hostess-performer starts a feud, and between these difficulties, with the addition of marauding Indians, and a local gang of bandits, *Belinda* has a time orienting herself.

"Go West, Young Lady" is a musical burlesque of slugging, fast shooting West-

erns. Some of the satire is very clever and some pretty broad. Glenn Ford is a likeable hero, but spends much of the time submerged in lemon chiffon pie, which *Belinda* finds a handy weapon upon provocation. The musical interludes are pleasing and different. It is entertaining but not outstanding.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No value **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

KEEP 'EM FLYING ◇ ◇

Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, Martha Raye, Carol Bruce, William Gargan, Dick Foran, Charles Lang, William Davidson, Truman Bradley, Loring Smith. Directed by Arthur Lubin. Universal.

Following their friend *"Jinks" Roberts* (Dick Foran), an aerial dare-devil in the U. S. Army Air Corps, *Blackie* and *Heathcliff* (Abbott and Costello) try to crash the Academy as trained mechanics. The Major fails to appreciate their amateur abilities but is so impressed by their patriotic ardor that he puts them to work as grease monkeys. As usual, *Heathcliff's* flair for getting into trouble provides hilarity and excitement. In addition to the hokum there is enough story to provide drama. Sequences of the flying school, photographed at Cal-Aero, the Air Academy at Ontario, California, are impressive, and the patriotic musical finale is very effective.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good **Children, 8 to 12** Exciting and Funny

❖

LIFE BEGINS AT 8:30 ◇ ◇

Monty Wooley, Ida Lupino, Cornel Wilde, Sara Allgood, Melville Cooper, J. Edward Bromberg, Wm. Demarest, Hal K. Dawson, Wm. Halligan, Milton Parsons, Inez Palange, Chas. LaTorre. Produced and written for the screen by Nunnally Johnson from a play by Evelyn Williams. Direction by Irving Pichel. 20th Century-Fox.

A huge gallery might easily be filled with memorable portraits of broken down old actors that already have been created on stage and screen. Now Monty Woolley has added a new and exceptionally skilful one to the collection. "Life Begins at 8:30" provides a rich opportunity for Mr. Woolley's talent, and the direction and cast are far above average, but many people, even while laughing at the comedy, will find the film depressing. It is largely devoted to the unhappy situation of a daughter's life made miserable by a dipsomaniac father who could have been the leading actor of his time. Even the father's charm and humor and the promise of the daughter's release do not altogether cover up the undertones of cynicism and despair that are inherent in the theme.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Adult in theme and depressing **Children, 8 to 12** No

LITTLE JOE THE WRANGLER ◇ ◇

Johnny Mack Brown, Tex Ritter, Fuzzy Knight, Jennifer Holt, Florine McKinney, Glen Strange. Director, Lewis D. Collins. Universal.

This is an unpretentious Western with somewhat less than average interest. Young audiences will probably get a few good laughs from Fuzzy Knight's broad humor.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fairly entertaining **Children, 8 to 12** Harmless

❖

LUCKY JORDAN ◇ ◇

Alan Ladd, Helen Walker, Marie McDonald, Mabel Paige, Sheldon Leonard, Lloyd Corrigan, Russell Hoyt, John Wengraf, Dave Willock. Director, Frank Tuttle. Paramount.

Though it may be possible that gangsters can become patriots when faced with the menace of the Fifth Column, this is a theme which seems hardly worth repeating. *Lucky Jordan* is a draft-dodger from the underworld, and the audience is apparently supposed to applaud his change of heart when he refuses to allow himself to be made a tool of saboteurs. The production values are good enough, but the ethics are confused and most of the characters belong to a very low order of humanity.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

MY HEART BELONGS TO DADDY ◇ ◇

Richard Carlson, Martha O. Driscoll, Cecil Kellaway, Florence Bates, Mabel Paige, Frances Gifford, Velma Berg. Original screen play by F. Hugh Herbert. Direction by Robert Siodmak. Paramount.

Possibly it is due to a poor regulation of timing that many of the jokes miss fire and many of the scenes fail to be hilariously funny. The plot is one of those far-fetched affairs which may or may not result in successful farce: a former bubble dancer fleeing from dictatorial parents-in-law, is stranded in a heavy snow storm and gives birth to a child in the home of a young professor, while a versatile taxi driver officiates as obstetrician, butler, and general manager of the household. Cecil Kellaway who takes the part of this paragon, is often amusing and Richard Carlson's characterization is good, but others in the cast contribute merely routine performances.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No **Children, 8 to 12** No

❖

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER ◇ ◇

Loretta Young, Brian Aherne, Jeff Donnell, William Wright, Sidney Toler, Gale Sondergaard, Donald MacBride, Lee Patrick, Don Costello, Blanche Yurka, Richard Gaines, James Burke. Screen play by Richard Flournoy and Jack Henley from story by Kelley Roos. Directed by Richard Wallace. Produced by Samuel Bischoff. Columbia Pictures.

A much-used story idea is presented with

indifferent success in this comedy murder mystery. *Jeff* and *Nancy Troy* rent a decrepit apartment in Greenwich Village in order to get atmosphere for *Jeff* who writes murder mysteries. The house turns out to be inhabited by people who are being blackmailed by an unidentified persecutor and, when a dead body is found, the *Troys* do some amateur sleuthing.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Passable; a matter of taste

Children, 8 to 12 Not recommended

♦

PITTSBURGH ◇ ◇

Marlene Dietrich, John Wayne, Randolph Scott, Frank Craven, Louise Albritton, Shemp Howard, Thomas Gomez, Ludwig Stossel, Samuel S. Hinds, Paul Fix, William Haade, Charles Coleman, Nestor Palva. Directed by Lewis Seiler. Universal.

This is a stirring social drama which almost defeats its own purpose by laying so much stress on the despicable qualities of a man that his regeneration seems rather unbelievable. The story is of two coal miners who through their own efforts rise to the top. Then *Pittsburgh,* the opportunist, double-crosses everyone and soon starts on the downward path. The war comes and awakens his finer instincts, and by demonstrating loyalty to his country, he also demonstrates it to his friends. Miss Dietrich as a miner's daughter plays a sympathetic, down-to-earth character. Frank Craven almost steals the show as *"Doc" Powers,* the man who sees the magic possibilities inherent in coal, and helps to fuse labor and capital into a perfect production unit. The theme is inspiring and logically developed.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Mature

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature

♦

THE POWERS GIRL ◇ ◇

George Murphy, Anne Shirley, Carole Landis, Alan Mowbray, Benny Goodman and his Orchestra, Dennis Day. Screen play by E. Edwin Moran and Harry Segall. Based on story by W. A. Pierce and Malvin Wold. Direction by Norman McLeod. Charles Rogers Production. United Artists.

"The Powers Girl" is long on feminine pulchritude and short on plot. It is all about two sisters, *Ellen,* whom "men look up to" and *Kay,* "whom men look up." While *Ellen* is all sweetness and goodness, *Kay* is mean and self-centered, but the latter becomes the Powers Girl of 1943 and *Ellen* gets the questionable reward of a cameraman (George Murphy) just one jump ahead of the Army. George Murphy carries off several outlandish situations with relish and spontaneity in a picture which on the whole is pretty much cut and dried and occasionally awkward. To be sure the description of the training of a Powers model adds glamor, as do the very beautiful dance formations and the presentation of the successful models of the year. Benny Goodman's Orchestra performs with its usual rhythmic proficiency, offering close-ups of tootling musicians for those who like that sort of thing, and Dennis Day, better heard than seen, renders several up-to-date songs harmoniously.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Nothing objectionable

Children, 8 to 12 Little interest and too mature

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RANDOM HARVEST ◇ ◇

Ronald Colman, Greer Garson, Philip Dorn, Reginald Owen, Edmund Gwenn, Henry Travers, Susan Peters, Bramwell Fletcher, Rhys Williams, Una O'Connor, Aubrey Mather, Margaret Wycherly. Screen play by Claudine West, George Frosechel, and Arthur Wimperis. Based upon the novel by James Hilton. Musical score by Herbert Stothart. Direction by Mervin LeRoy. Produced by Sidney Franklin. M.-G.-M.

Fraught with the same quality of haunting beauty which made "Goodbye, Mr. Chips" and "Mrs. Miniver" pictures to be long remembered, "Random Harvest" is an exceptionally fine interpretation of the popular novel by James Hilton. It is a difficult story to handle, since it is based on an intricate problem in psychiatry. *Charles Rainier* is a veteran of the last war, whose memory has been obliterated by shell shock. He finds a new life in his marriage to a lovely woman until an accident restores recollections of his earlier existence and blots out the three years he has lived as *"Smithy."* When he assumes a position of importance in finance and politics, his wife follows him as secretary, fearful to disclose the relationship of those idyllic years lest his mind react unfortunately to the revelation. Ronald Colman is noteworthy in a part which calls for thoughtful, restrained acting, and Greer Garson's delicate interpretation of the wife, *Paula,* combines spiritual beauty with a warm human quality. At times she looks like a portrait by Romney. Not to be overlooked is young Susan Peters, as *Charles'* adoring little step-niece, who holds her own in a distinguished cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Probably interesting to those over 14

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature and too long

♦

RISE AND SHINE ◇ ◇

Jack Oakie, George Murphy, Linda Darnell, Walter Brennan, Milton Berle, Sheldon Leonard, Donald Meek, Ruth Donnelly, Raymond Walburn, Donald McBride, Emma Dunn, Charles Waldron, Mildred Gover, William Haade, Dick Rich, John Hiestand, Claire Dubrey, Francis Pierlot, Paul Harvey. Lyrics and music by Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger. Directed by Allan Dwan. 20th Century-Fox.

No doubt admirers of James Thurber's satirical humor will question the adaptation of "Rise and Shine" into a musical comedy.

but actually the script has profited by some of the most incredible situations and uproarious characters we have seen for many months. These must have been suggested by the master humorist, and casting and direction have carried out the spirit of his fun ingeniously. Jack Oakie is given the role of *Bolesciewcsz Bradislaus (Boley)*, moron halfback on the team of good old Clayton College, a school with a deficit to be recouped on the big game. *Grandpa*, Civil War veteran, runs a household of indivualists who remind us of some we met in "You Can't Take It With You." *Professor* and *Mrs. Murray*, curiously humorous eccentrics, have hilarious lines. Everyone will enjoy the absurdities and have a thoroughly good time.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Great fun

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

❖

REUNION IN FRANCE ◇ ◇

Joan Crawford, John Wayne, Philip Dorn, Ann Ayers, Reginald Owen, Albert Basserman, John Carradine, J. Edward Bromberg, Moroni Olsen, Henry Daniell, Howard da Silva, Charles Arnt, Morris Ankrum, Edith Evanson, Ernest Dorian, Margaret Lawrence, Odette Myrtil, Peter Whitney. Directed by Jules Dassin. M.-G.-M.

We have had only a few films depicting Paris immediately following its capitulation to Nazi might. "Paris Calling" was one, and as in that film, the heroine of "Reunion" is a wealthy social butterfly who tastes the full measure of defeat. The plot is constructed to create high suspense, with the girl, and the audience, torn between loyalty to France and loyalty to individuals. The Parisian setting is very interesting, showing regimented Nazi sightseeing, Nazi women greedliy buying French luxuries and American negro entertainers slyly insulting placid and confused night club patrons. But the menace of Nazi power is not minimized, and the ending is exciting and convincing. Joan Crawford, Philip Dorn and John Wayne are good in their roles, supported by an excellent cast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good romance with exciting action

Children, 8 to 12 Too mature to interest

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SEVEN MILES FROM ALCATRAZ ◇ ◇

James Craig, Bonita Granville, Frank Jenks, Cliff Edwards, George Cleveland, Esford Gage, Tala Birell, John Banner, Otto Reichow. Screen play by Joseph Krumgold from a story by John D. Klorer. Direction by Edward Dmytryk. RKO.

Apparently meat rationing does not affect movie plots, for there's a lot of ham in this one. It tells the story of two criminals, escaped from Alcatraz, who are transformed into courageous, patriotic Americans. They come to realize that nothing can be worse than taking orders from Nazis. The criminals are credible types but the romance is a touch of sentimentality which somehow seems an inexcusable breach of taste. The San Francisco Bay area in a war time blackout with the added menace of a lurking enemy submarine is an interesting setting and well pictured, and an adult idly looking for an exciting action melodrama will find his attention held.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 No

Children, 8 to 12 No

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SILVER QUEEN ◇ ◇

George Brent, Priscilla Lane, Bruce Cabot, Lynne Overman, Eugene Pallette, Janet Beecher, Guinn Williams, Eleanor Stewart, Arthur Hunnicutt, Marietta Canty, Spencer Charters, Frederick Burton, Claire Whitney, Cy Kendall, Roy Barcroft, George Renavent, Sam McDaniels. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. United Artists.

Period costumes and colorful settings give some entertainment value to this hackneyed and unethical story of a New York society girl who becomes the gambling queen of the Barbary Coast.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Ethically poor

Children, 8 to 12 No

◆

STAND BY FOR ACTION ◇ ◇

Robert Taylor, Brian Donlevy, Charles Laughton, Walter Brennan, Marilyn Maxwell, Henry O'Neill, Marta Linden, Chill Wills, D. Dumbrill, Richard Quine, Douglas Fowley, Tim Ryan, Dick Simmons, Byron Foulger, Hobart Cavanaugh, Inez Cooper. Original story by Capt. Harvey Haislip, U.S.N., and R. C. Sheriff. Director, Robert Z. Leonard. Producers, Robert Z. Leonard and Orville O. Dull. M.-G.-M.

Here is one war picture that is as exhilarating as it was intended to be. Soon after the outbreak of the World War II, *Lt. Comdr. Roberts* is placed in command of an obsolete destroyer which had a glorious record in the first World War. *Lieut. Masterman*, a young Harvard graduate, is made his executive officer. Under the leadership of *Roberts, Masterman* learns that the Navy's sea code, while sometimes harsh personally, is based on good reasoning. The old destroyer, on its shake-down cruise, is attacked by a Japanese battleship. *Roberts* is injured and *Masterman* carries out his superior's plan of attack, sinking the battleship, and thus bringing even greater glory to the old destroyer.

The emotional impact is skilfully built up to the destroyer's triumphant battle. The details of life aboard are interestingly shown, and the introductory scenes, using actual newsreel shots, are effectively timed to provide the cause and urgency, in the early days of the war, for securing the services of any boats, no matter how ancient. As would be expected from this outstanding cast, each character is portrayed in a most satisfying manner.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 Good

STRICTLY IN THE GROOVE ◇ ◇

Mary Healy, Leon Errol, Grace McDonald, Martha Tilton, Richard Davis, Shemp Howard, Franklin Pangborn, Ozzie Nelson and his Orchestra. Director, Vernon Keays. Universal.

Except to "jive" enthusiasts, this film has little to offer. The most that can be said for it is that it has a breezy atmosphere of younthful gaiety. The plot is one that has seen long service. A college band goes to the rescue of a failing dude ranch, and the leader thereby convinces his father that furnishing "jive" music is a worthwhile career.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Fair

Children, 8 to 12 Not much interest

✤

TENNESSEE JOHNSON ◇ ◇

Van Heflin, Lionel Barrymore. Ruth Hussey, Marjorie Main, Regis Toomey, J. Edward Bromberg, Grant Withers, Alec Craig, Charles Dingle, Carl Benton Reid, Russel Hicks, Noah Beery, Sr., Robert Warwick, Montague Love. Screen play by John L. Balderston and Wells Root based on original story by Milton Gunzberg and Alvin Meyers. Direction by William Dieterle. Produced by J. Walter Ruben. M.-G.-M.

This is an heroic treatment of the life of Andrew Johnson, the only President of the United States to be impeached. Vindicating Johnson of charges brought against him by a hostile Congress, the story brings out the influences which shaped his character and impelled him to enter politics as a means of furthering the rights of the common man, and it makes him understandable, admirable, and worthy of respect. The cast is excellent throughout. The film is unusually worthwhile entertainment advancing the ideals of unity and tolerance and the principles of American Democracy.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good and makes history live

Children, 8 to 12 Mature but good

✤

THE UNDYING MONSTER ◇ ◇

James Ellison, Heather Angel, John Howard, Bramwell Fletcher, Hether Thatcher, Aubrey Mather, Halliwell Hobbs. Screen play by Lillie Hayward and Mitchell Jacoby from the novel by Jessie Douglas Kerruish. Direction by John Brahm. 20th Century-Fox.

"When stars hang bright on a clear and frosty night" a monster commits murder near the great, lonely sea-girt castle of "Hammond Hall," and this seems to occur about once in every generation until Scotland Yard takes the matter in hand and with the aid of a spectroscope and modern psychiatry solves the riddle for all time. This is a good old-fashioned thriller with dark, mysterious atmosphere, eerie sound effects, and a well-chosen cast. Sometimes the action is exaggerated beyond the point of credibilty, but those who enjoy the type will not object too much.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Would probably enjoy it

Children, 8 to 12 Too gruesome at times

WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME

Allan Jones, Marla Shelton, Gloria Jean, Jane Frazee, Donald O'Connor, Peggy Ryan, Olin Howland, Selmar Jackson, Richard Davies, Clyde Fillmore. Director, Charles Lamont. Universal.

Allan Jones and Gloria Jean sing, Phil Spitalny's all-girl orchestra plays, a colored team dances, and the Peggy Ryan-Donald O'Connor combination provides comedy. If you like these performers, you will like their show. The plot is unimportant.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Yes

Children, 8 to 12 Harmless

✤

WHISTLING IN DIXIE ◇ ◇

Red Skelton, Ann Rutherford, George Bancroft, Guy Kibbee, Diana Lewis, Peter Whitney, "Rags" Ragland, Celia Travers, Lucien Littlefield, Louis Mason, Mark Daniels, Pierre Watkin. Director, S. Sylvan Simon. Producer, George Haight. M.-G.-M.

This is an hilarious picture which belongs entirely to Red Skelton and his unique type of humor. The dialogue is a constant stream of "gag" lines. Many of the situations approach the fantastic, but the pace is rapid and the story is adequate for its purpose. Red Skelton again plays *The Fox,* master radio detective. Answering a plea for help from a girl in Georgia, he and his fiancee take a hand in solving a mysterious crime.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Good fun

Children, 8 to 12 Yes

✤

WRECKING CREW ◇ ◇

Richard Arlen, Chester Morris, Jean Parker, Joe Sawyer, Esther Dale, Alexander Granach, Billy Nelson, Evelyn Brent, Ralph Sanford, Frank Melton, William Hall, Fred Sherman, Alec Craig, Nigel De Brulier, Byron Foulger. Directed by Frank McDonald. Paramount.

Passably interesting in that it shows in detail the process of wrecking skyscrapers, this is otherwise a bleak and depressing melodrama. The plot centers around the efforts of one of the wrecking crew to prove that his reputation of being a jinx is unwarranted.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Not recommended

Children, 8 to 12 No

✤

YOU WERE NEVER LOVELIER ◇ ◇

Fred Astaire, Rita Hayworth, Adolphe Menjou, Leslie Brooks, Adele Mara, Isobel Elsom. Xavier Cugat and his orchestra. Screen play by Michael Fessier and Ernest Pagano and Delmar Daves. Story by Carlos Olivari. Music by Jerome Kern. Lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Musical Director, Leigh Harline. Director, William A. Seiter. Producer, Louis F. Edelman. Columbia.

A more charming and delightful picture than this would be hard to find. It is a dance musical set in Buenos Aires, and its slight

plot is made up of the entertaining situations that develop in the *Acuna* family through the efforts of *Papa Acuna* to secure suitors for his three marriagable daughters. Fred Astaire and Rita Hayworth make a most engaging couple, and dance beautifully together. The costumes and backgrounds are lovely and the whole production is in exceptionally good taste.

Adolescents, 12 to 16 Excellent

Children, 8 to 12 If they like musicals

INDEX . . . JULY through DECEMBER, 1942

A

Across the Pacific....November
The Affairs of Martha....July-August
A-Haunting We Will Go....July-August
American Empire....December
Among the Living....December
Andy Hardy's Double Life....December
Apache Trail....September-October
Arabian Nights....December
Are Husbands Necessary?....July-August
Army Surgeon....November
The Avenger....December

B

The Battle of Midway....December
Behind the Eight Ball....December
Berlin Correspondent....September-October
Between Us Girls....September-October
The Big Shot....July-August
The Big Street....September-October
The Black Swan....November

C

Cairo....November
Calling Dr. Gillespie....July-August
Careful, Soft Shoulders....September-October
Casablanca....December
Cat People....December
China Girl....December
Confirm or Deny....December
Crossroads....July-August

D

Desperate Journey....September-October
Destination Unknown....November
Dr. Gillespie's New Assistant....December
Dr. Renault's Secret....November

E

Eagle Squadron....July-August
Escape From Hongkong....November
Eyes in the Night....November

F

The Falcon's Brother....November
Flight Lieutenant....July-August
Flying Fortress....November
Flying Tigers....November
Footlight Serenade....July-August
For Me and My Gal....November
The Forest Rangers....November
Friendly Enemies....July-August

G

The Gay Sisters....July-August
George Washington Slept Here....November
Get Hep to Love....November
Girl Trouble....November
Give Out, Sisters....November
The Glass Key....November
Go West, Young Lady....December

H

The Hard Way....November
Henry Aldrich, Editor....November
Her Cardboard Lover....July-August
Here We Go Again....September-October
Highways By Night....September-October
Hillbilly Blitzkrieg....September-October
Holiday Inn....July-August

I

Iceland....September-October
I Live on Danger....July August
I Married a Witch....November
Invisible Agent....September-October
It Happened in Flatbush....July-August

J

Jackass Mail....July-August
Journey for Margaret....November
Journey Into Fear....September-October
Just Off Broadway....November

K

Keep 'Em Flying....December

L

Lady in a Jam....July-August
Life Begins at 8:30....December
Little Joe, the Wrangler....December
The Loves of Edgar Allan Poe....July-August
Lucky Jordan....December

M

The Magnificent Ambersons....July-August
The Major and the Minor....November
Manila Calling....November
The Man in the Trunk....November
Men of Texas....September-October
Mexican Spitfire's Elephant....September-October
Miss Annie Rooney....July-August
The Moon and Sixpence....November
Moonlight in Havana....November
Mrs. Miniver....July-August
Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch....November
My Heart Belongs to Daddy....December
My Sister Eileen....November

N

The Navy Comes Through....November
Nightmare....November
A Night to Remember....December
Northwest Rangers....November
Now, Voyager....September-October

O

The Omaha Trail....November
Once Upon a Honeymoon....November
One of Our Aircraft Is Missing....November
Orchestra Wives....September-October

P

Pacific Rendezvous....July-August
The Palm Beach Story....November
Panama Hattie....September-October
Pardon My Sarong....September-October
The Pied Piper....September-October
Pierre of the Plains....September-October
Pittsburgh....December
The Postman Didn't Ring....July-August
The Power's Girl....December
The Pride of the Yankees....September-October
Priorities on Parade....September-October

R

Random Harvest....December
Reunion in France....December
Rise and Shine....December
Road to Morocco....November

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S

Scattergood Survives a Murder.....November
Seven Days Leave.....November
Seven Miles From Alcatraz..... .....December
Seven Sisters .....September-October
Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror November
Silver Queen .....December
Sin Town .....November
Somewhere I'll Find You.....September-October
Springtime in the Rockies.....November
Stand By For Action.....December
Street of Chance.....November
Strictly in the Groove.....December
Suicide Squadron .....September-October
Sundown Jim .....September-October
Sweater Girl .....July-August

SIX—Motion Picture

T

Tales of Manhattan.....September-October
The Talk of the Town.....September-October
Ten Gentlemen From West Point.....July-August
Tennessee Johnson .....December
That Other Woman.....November
They All Kissed the Bride.....July-August
Through Different Eyes.....July-August
Thunderbirds .....November
Tish .....September-October
Tombstone .....July-August

U

Undercover Man .....September
The Undying Monster.....December
United We Stand.....July-August

W

Wake Island .....September-October
The War Against Mrs. Hadley..September-October
War Dogs .....November
Whistling in Dixie.....December
White Cargo .....November
Who Done It?.....November
When Johnny Comes Marching Home...December
Wings and the Woman.....July-August
Wings for the Eagle.....July-August
The World at War.....November
Wrecking Crew .....December

Y

A Yank at Eton.....September-October
Yankee Doodle Dandy.....July-August
You Can't Escape Forever.....November
The Young Mr. Pitt.....November
You Were Never Lovelier.....December

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